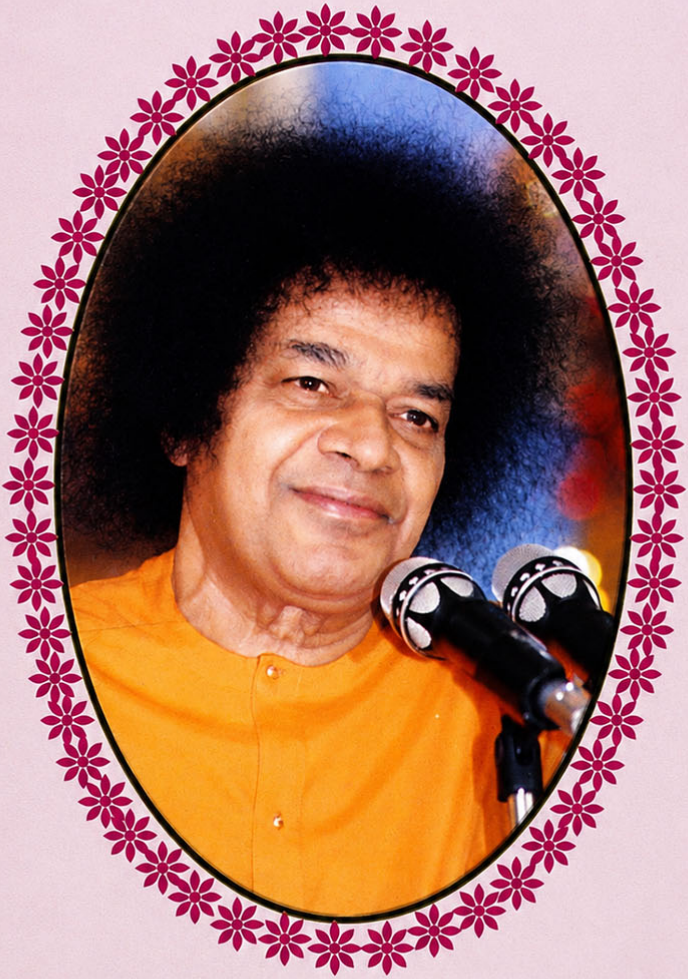
# SADHANA

## *The Inward Path*



# SADHANA
# THE INWARD PATH

**Quotations from the Divine Discourses of**
**BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA**

PRASANTHI NILAYAM

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# FOREWORD

Sadhana (spiritual practice) is all of life; every act, thought and word is a step towards or away from God. And, God is not high up in the heavens; He is in us, with us, beside us, behind us, before us. He is in every cell, as life; He is in every atom as activity. He is all this and more besides.

Every human being is equipped with intelligence by means of which he can inquire, investigate, and experience the central Truth: God is His own Truth. Sadhana leads one to the Inward Path, the *Nivritthi Marga,* as distinct from the *Pravritthi Marga,* which leads him away into the objective world where the senses misinterpret and mislead. Bhagawan has come to put mankind back on the rails of *Sraddha* (faith) and *Bhakthi* (devotion), so that it can proceed smooth and safe to the Bliss of Self-realisation.

This work is one in a series that are being brought out in an effort to assemble together important facets of the Message from Bhagawan's Discourses and present them for deeper study, contemplation and practice—*Sravana* (hearing), *Manana* (reflecting) and *Nididhyasana* (inner concentration).

His direction and advice help the beginner as well as the master to march onward and inward, until triumph crowns him. He is the Guide, Guardian and Goal.

Let us make these pages our Manual for Liberation. He will bless our journey provided we start on it for, He is both Light and the Love.

Prashanthi Nilayam,
18 August 1976

**N. KASTURI**

# 1. Spiritual Discipline—Sadhana

## THE PRAYER

1. *Asatho maa sath gamaya*: "From this transient world of decay, lead me to the everlasting world of Bliss"; *Thamaso maa jyothir gamaya*: "Give me the effulgence of Thy Grace and illumine my soul with truth"; *Mruthyor maa amrtham gamaya*: "Save me from the torture of birth and death, destroy the cravings of the mind which produce the seeds of birth."

x x x

2. Man's life must be a perpetual Sadhana; any day is a good day for starting Sadhana, whether it falls in the Dakshinayana or Uttarayana. One need not wait for the Sun to turn North. The months and the *ayanas* are all related to *Prakruthi* (nature), and so they have only relative value.

x x x

3. *Hitha* and *Mitha*—pleasant and moderate—these are the directions. Let it not be too garish, too ramshackle, too costly, too fragile. Take the middle course; that will yield maximum benefits. The craving for sense objects cannot be given up fully; so, transform it into an instrument for worship. Dedicate all your efforts to the Lord; accept all achievements and failures, as proofs of the Grace of the Lord. His Will decreed, that they should so happen. Transform all the six passions into instruments for spiritual uplift.

x x x

4. Sow in the field of your heart the seeds of good thoughts, charged with humility; irrigate it with the waters of love; protect the growing crop with the pesticide called courage; feed the crop with the fertiliser of concentration; then, the 'bhakti' plants will yield the harvest of *Jnana,* the eternal wisdom, that you are He, and when that revelation comes, you become He, for, you were always He, though you did not know it so far.

x x x

5. The individual can fulfil himself only through the service of others, expansion into the universal. Sadhana has to enlarge the vision, enhance the

experience, and enthuse the *Jivatma* to merge in the *Paramatma.*

x x x

6. But the question is asked—Then, why is He not seen? Well, He is, as butter is in milk, in every drop, through and through. If butter has to be seen, then certain processes have to be gone into—boiling, curdling, churning, etc. So too, by certain spiritual disciplines, like repeating the name on the tongue, He who dwells in the heart can be visualised; the immanent God can be experienced as Real.

x x x

7. From the experience of saints and sages, you can realise that the joy got from the external world is infinitesimal when compared with the Bliss won through spiritual discipline. To win that bliss, Sadhana full of *Vairagya* (detachment, renunciation) is essential. When boring is done to draw water from the bowels of the earth, the pipe has to be kept free from air so that the water could rise up. If air enters, the water will not rise. So too, be sure that attachment to worldly things does not mar your Sadhana. *Prema* will not well up if sensual pleasures or personal pride invade the mind.

x x x

8. There are three things which one should keep in mind, namely, I will not think of anything else except God, I will not do anything else without the permission of God and I will have my attention completely fixed on God.

x x x

9. You complain that your neighbour began his spiritual discipline only two years since, while you have been keeping the schedule since 20 years. But, he has secured happiness while you are miserable. You feel you have been coming to me since years, but I take near me those who have come just a short while ago. Your reactions lead you to ascribe injustice and partiality, but the answer lies in the past about which you are not aware. Twenty hammer strokes have been given to a slab, but it did not break. Another fellow comes along and at his second stroke, the slab is broken. The man who dealt the 20 is disappointed and the man who broke it in 2 is elated, but the slab broke as a result of the cumulative impact of the 22. Your neighbour has to his credit 20 years of Sadhana, stored up in the causal body into which he came, from his previous birth to his present one. Your nature and your predilections are shaped by the way in which you loved and wrought, fed and fought, in the long series of lives you had already.

x x x

10. But the *Ashrama dharma* and the *Varna dharma* (the codes of moral conduct prescribed for the castes and for those in the Four Stages of Life—Student, Householder, Recluse and Monk) do not hinder in any way the discipline of fixing the mind on God or of purifying the mind of evil or worshipping the Lord through all one's actions, words and thoughts. The distinctions of sex or caste or status or stage of life affect only those who live in the awareness of the body as Reality and who act as if the world is absolute and eternal.

x x x

11. Caste without character is meaningless; it is just an empty label. Sadhana, without the base of character, is like the journey of a blind man. Morality, virtue, character—these are vital. On the basis of these, if Sadhana is done according to the scheme laid down for the path one has selected, then there is no doubt of success. But you must take note of a caution that is essential. You must not give place to sloth, simply because *Jaathi* or birth is not important. *Neethi* or moral standards accrue according to *Jaathi* also; and so, to foster them the consciousness of *Jaathi* is helpful, and important. But, if through the accumulated merit of past births, one has the treasure of goodness and virtue, then one need not

attach much importance to *Jaathi*. Only those who practised Yoga in previous births and who could not complete the process will have that type of excellence. The main thing is to acquire the *Neethi* that is prescribed for the *Jaathi*, foster the *Jaathi* with *Neethi* and make yourself fit and full, with a high status in life. For some distance on the path of Sadhana and spirituality, both *Jaathi* and *Neethi* will help. The *Gunas* (qualities, properties) will be sublimated through these two.

x x x

12. In certain Vishnu temples, a special door called the *Vaikuntadwara* is opened, and people can pass through it into the Presence. *Vaikuntadwara* is the gate to heaven, that is to say, the gateway to self-realisation. The gateway to that heaven is not to be found only there; it will open, right in front of you, wherever you are. Knock and it will open. Vishnu means, *sarva vyapi*, He who is everywhere. So, his residence *Vaikunta* (Heaven) must be everywhere. You can gain entry, by knocking with the correct password on your lips. Your heart can become *Vaikunta* if you but purify it and allow God to manifest in it. *Vaikunta* means 'the place where there is no shadow of grief.' When God manifests in your heart, all is full and free.

x x x

13. "Spiritual discipline, intensification of *Japa* (recitation of holy names), *Dhyana* (meditation), *Seva* (service) and *Sankirtan* (singing that comes from the heart and with joy)—these can achieve the same end, without landing the human community in the morass of animality."

x x x

14. Placing your burden on Destiny and keeping quiet means diminution of effort. With effort and prayer, new Destiny can be attained. Without effort and prayer, Destiny and Grace are not gained. Start the effort!

x x x

15. If the seeds of True wisdom that I sow do not come up as good saplings and give good harvest, I too am affected. On the other hand, if they grow well and fructify into a harvest of Ananda, how happy I would be. That is My food. This is the Seva you should do to me. There is nothing higher than this.

x x x

16. Great poems deal with the eternal thirst of man for God; they are rich in the ambrosia that quenches that thirst. They satisfy and build up strength to laugh at

life's fortunes. Without spiritual sadhana, the expansion of the consciousness, the broadening of sympathy, the sharpening of vision, the deepening of contact with the springs of wisdom within oneself and within others, poetry is but a purposeless, pallid pastime.

x x x

People hesitate to enter the field of Sadhana, though they crave for the harvest of joy. They are not willing to spend a pie, they are reluctant to do an iota of exertion; but they want *Moksha* to drop from the heavens on their laps. They would fain have the vision of God thrust painlessly into their brain! When Maitreyi was given by Yajnavalkya vast wealth in the shape of gold and cattle, when he left hearth and home on his spiritual quest, she asked him whether they would be of any use for her in her quest. When her husband replied that they were transient and cheap when compared to the wealth of spiritual experience, she cast them off and sought the precious wealth of *Thapas* (austerity) and *Sraddha* (faith). She got eternal joy through them.

x x x

18. Study of scriptures and religious texts and such books without effort to practise, results in ill-health. Being false to one's professions eats away one's self-respect and one starts getting ashamed of oneself. So, learn and practise; eat and digest. That is the advice I give you.

x x x

19. Only you must have the staunch determination to use this chance to the full. You are near and those who are far, are so, only with reference to space, not with reference to My *Prema* (Divine Love). To realise the Lord, you must welcome hardships, trials, and sufferings. You must dwell on the Name and Form steadily and with Faith. You must discard all inferior sources of joy.

x x x

20. Resolve that relying on His Grace, you shall be free from illness from this moment. Transfer the faith that you have in drugs to God; put your trust, not in medicine, but, in Madhava. I am astounded at the number of people resorting to tablets and tonics. Resort to prayer, to Sadhana, *Japam* and *Dhyanam*. They are the vitamins you need; they will restore you. No tablet is as efficacious as Ramnam. I shall give you *Vibhuthi* (Sacred ash) and that will cure

you. Now, you are in two minds, like the man who had to leave his shoes outside the temple. He stood before the shrine with folded hands, muttering a *stotra*, but, his mind was filled with anxiety about the safety of the shoes he had to place outside. The hospital is for those who have faith in drugs and doctor. But, what can drugs and doctors do without the Grace of God? The day will surely come, when the hospital will be superfluous, since all will be healthy and free from illness, accepting the Sadhana way, the *Ananda* way, to peace and happiness.

x x x

21. When you are engaged in the simple operation of threading a needle, note how much of concentration is needed for success. The fingers have to be steady, the eyes fixed and clear, the end of the thread screwed into a point, the needle's eye kept unshaken. The same care has to be taken when any other operation is to succeed. The Name of the Lord is the Bow, which you lift when you raise your voice in *bhajan.* The mind is the arrow you fix; so fix your eye on Brahman the target, and with single-pointed effort, shoot. Then the goal can be realised.

x x x

22. If you feel that you too must have the experience or else you will not believe, well, come and experience. There is no use simply coming one day and going away the next day, saying, "I have seen Sathya Sai Baba. He wears a fine long gown and He has wonderful hair." If you spend the time lounging in the hotels here or playing cards, or listening to tales, how can you understand? Determine to discover, decide to learn, dive deep, and then you will know. Thousands have come now and in the years gone by; many have no desire to know; many who have the desire are unaware of the fact that they must pay more attention to actual experience of the mind, not to the sense impressions. You may be staring at something; but if your mind is not focused on it, you cannot cognise it. If your body is in this auditorium, your car in the hotel and your eye all round the compound, how can anything be learnt? *Prema* (Divine Love) alone can understand *prema.*

23. When the mind of man is unattached to the ups and downs of life; but is able to maintain equanimity under all circumstances, then even physical health can be assured. The mental firmament must be like the sky, which bears no mark of the passage through it of birds or planes or clouds. Illnesses are caused more by malnutrition of the mind than of the body.

Doctors speak of vitamin deficiency; I will call it the deficiency of vitamin G and I will recommend the repetition of the Name of God, with accompanying contemplation of the glory and grace of God. That is Vitamin G. That is the medicine; regulated life and habits are 2/3 of treatment, while the medicine is just 1/3 only.

x x x

24. Surrender can be effected only after the perfection of detachment from sensual pleasures, accompanied by discrimination between the real and the unreal. The taints of "I" and "Mine" have to be removed by rigorous Sadhana, chief among the disciplines being *Namasmarana* (repeating the name of the Lord); for, when you dwell on the names of the Lord, His Majesty, His Grace, His Potence, His Pervasiveness, these get fixed in the consciousness and one's own capacities and capabilities get eclipsed in the Divine. So, humility increases and surrender is possible, quite easily. This is the very purpose of human existence, to see God and merge in His Glory. All other victories are futile. The Vedas proclaim this to be the final goal of man. The Upanishads declare the path. The *Gita* illumines it. The saints and sages proclaim its grandeur. Avathars

(Incarnations of God) come when people stray away from it and get lost in the wilderness and the wastes.

x x x

25. When you are depressed by what appears to be loss or calamity, engage yourselves in *Namasmarana,* the recitation and recollection of the Names of the Lord; that will give you consolation, courage and the true perspective. Remember the distress and calamity that the saints underwent with enthusiastic welcome and be calm during every storm. People laughed at them and called them mad; but they knew that they were in the Grace Hospital of God, not the mental hospital of man. They had full faith in their destiny and so they had full faith in God; they laughed when calamities tried to cow down their eagerness, for they knew their latent strength, the strength of the Atma (Divine Soul) within.

x x x

26. Just as the wild elephant, roaming in the forest as the head of the herd, is trapped and trained to sit on a three-legged stool in the circus ring, the mind of man too has to be trained by a systematic process of discipline—*Sama* (control of the senses), *Dama* (detachment), *Uparathi* (practice of withdrawal of

senses from the objective world), *Thithiksha* (vigilance, fortitude), *Sraddha* (steady faith) and *Samadhana* (mind control)—so that it may subserve the best interests of man. To go before a magistrate and plead, one has to pass the LL.B. degree examination; to be able to prescribe medicine to a sick man, you must pass the M.B.B.S. degree examination. You have to obtain a licence or have your name entered in the Register of Medical Practitioners. Everywhere for every profession or post they ask you your qualification. How much more is the need for proper qualifications in the spiritual field, for winning the Grace of God? You aim high, but, you make no effort to reach that height.

In spiritual matters, faith is the very essence. Doubt shakes the foundations of Sadhana and is, therefore, to be avoided. Have faith in the wisdom of the ancients; do not pit your tiny little brain against the intuitions of saints and their discoveries.

x x x

27. When you enter a shop and select cloth for pants or bush shirts, you ask for black, and the reason why you prefer that colour and dislike white or light shades is that the black will not reveal dirt! The

desire is not to remove the dirt, but, to hide it from gaze. This has become a universal weakness. People are ashamed of dirt; they do not seek cleanliness in the heart. That can be won only through Prema and *Sathya* (truth), through the repetition of the *manthra* communicated by the Guru and by Sadhana, practised regularly and steadily, with faith.

x x x

28. The eyes have to be trained to discover the footprints of God; in this process, the mind has to be mastered. The mind is the pivot of thoughts and feelings. The mind is the thinking aspect of Brahman; the Absolute Consciousness. The absolute Self manifesting itself in imaginative activity is Mind. However, instead of turning towards the Absolute, it turns outward, and starts using the senses as its instrument. It forgets its source, the Atma. How and why this happens is inexplicable. We know that this happens and that it can be avoided and prevented. The intellect cannot grasp the secret, which is called, *Maya* (The mysterious, creative and delusive power of Brahman through which God projects the appearance of the Universe), for it too is bound by it. One has to transcend the intellect in order to understand it. That is a fact and the fact has to be faced. The mind is the background of the world. If thoughts and

activities of the mind are sound, healthy, non-violent, filled with love, morally harmonious, then, peace is near at hand and Brahman can be attained. That is why Sadhana is to be strictly pursued to train the mind inward, towards God, its source.

x x x

29. You are advised to spend time in meditation or *Japam* or the quiet pursuit of *Namasmarana*; for, peace and joy are not to be found in external nature. They are treasures lying hidden in the inner realm of man: once they are located, man can never more be sad or agitated. So use this holy atmosphere, this splendid chance, these precious days to the fullest. With every inhalation, utter the name of God; with every exhalation, utter the name of God. Live in God, for Him, with Him.

x x x

30. In order to attain and understand Divinity, we must undertake Sadhana and behave in a way that is like the Divine.

x x x

# 2. Realization, Jnana, Viveka

1. No other human community has gone so deep into the problem of birth and death, of thoughts, and the continuity of the consequences of thoughts, words and deeds after death, as the Hindus. The solutions they discovered and verified are so universal, so convincing and so beneficial for individual and social uplift, that they have stood the test of centuries of critical assessment by scholars and sages of all lands. One commendable feature of this investigation is that reason has never taken a second place. At every step the sadhana is to be reinforced by reason. The sadhana is the regimen. The disease of *ajnana* (ignorance) is cured by the 'tablet' *Prajnana* (higher knowledge); that is to say, the damaging consequence of ignorance is cured by the higher knowledge.

x x x

2. The question, "Where does God exist?" is often trotted out by people nowadays. By unceasing

recitation of the name of God, Prahlada knew that God is everywhere; it is not correct to assert, "He is only here" or that "He is not there." The realisation of this Truth can come only after intense sadhana.

x x x

3. "Now, the law of human behaviour has become "each to himself"; this is because, the fact that all are "one-in-God" is not known and realised. This is the product of sadhana; the conviction is of slow growth, but, it has to be acquired.

x x x

4. God's grace is the shower of rain, as the sunlight. You have to do some sadhana to acquire it; the sadhana of keeping a pot upright to receive the rain, the sadhana of opening the door of your heart so that the sun may illumine it. Like the music that is broadcast over the radio, it is all around you; but you must switch your receiver on and tune in, to the right wavelength so that you can hear it and enjoy it. Pray for grace; but do at least this little sadhana. Grace will set everything right. Its main consequence is 'Self-realisation' (*Atmasakshatkara*); but there are other incidental benefits too, like a happy, contented

life here below, and a cool, courageous temper, established in unruffled equanimity or *shanthi.* The main benefit from a jewel is personal joy; but, when one has come to the last coin in the purse, one can sell it and start life again! That is an incidental advantage. The plantain tree has the bunch of fruits as its main gift! But the leaves, the soft core of the trunk—the flower bud—these are subsidiary items that can also be put into profitable use. This is the nature of grace. It fulfils a variety of wants.

x x x

5. Wherever you are, whatever work you do, do it as an act of worship, an act of dedication, an act for the glorification of God who is the inspirer, the witness, the Master. Do not divide your activities as, "These are for my sake" and "These are for the sake of God." Even if you divide zero by zero, you get zero. When you work, there should be no remainder, nothing should remain over. See all work as one. You should not, the Sastras say, leave any remainder or balance in debts, in disease, in vengeance against enemies, in the cycle of birth-death. Finish all, down to the last. They should not recur again.

   If you offer all activities at the feet of the Lord and free them from any trace of egoistic attachment, the

consequence will not bind you; you are free, you are liberated, you have *moksha* (salvation).

6. The easiest path to self-realisation is the surrender of the ego; *saranagathi.* Arjuna surrendered, and so the war in which he was engaged was transformed into a *yajna*, a spiritual exercise! Daksha performed a *yajna*; but, he did not surrender, he was so full of egoism that he slighted God! So, his *yajna* was transformed into a war reeking with hate. Do not pit your tiny ego against the Almighty; leave it to His will and you will have lasting peace.

x x x

7. Hold all your property and wealth in trust for the Lord who gave them to you; even your family, you must treat as a sacred trust, as persons given to you by the Lord to love, foster and guide. Thus, you must elevate your attachment into worship and make it an instrument for spiritual progress.

x x x

8. Love all, revere all, help all to the best of your ability. Endeavour to be as beneficial, as sweet, as soft as possible. Then, the spot on which you stand becomes as sacred as Kasi; the words that you utter

will be as holy as the scriptures. This sadhana will lead you to Realisation.

x x x

9. The Lord is nearest to you. Slide ajar the door of delusion; part the curtain of ignorance; open the closed eye; He is right there, before you! The fog of sensual pleasure is hiding Him from you. Switch on the light, the darkness disappears and He becomes visible.

x x x

10. *Karma* (action) cleanses the mind if it is done as a dedicatory act, the consequence being left to the Will of the Lord. Repentance saves even sinners from perdition. No ceremony of expiation is as effective as sincere repentance.

x x x

11. The lights have to be switched on in the *Anthah -karana* (mind, intelligence and ego together) of man, rather than in the house where the image of the Lord is installed and worshipped.

x x x

12. "Awake, arise and stop not till the goal is reached," it is "*Uththishta, Jagratha, Prapyavaraannibodhatha.*" But one need not march

towards the goal. It is not some place where you have to go. It is just the opening of the eye, the removal of the evil, the waking from the dream, the lighting of the *Jnanadeepa.*

x x x

13. If you adhere strictly to the *Dharmic* path and stick to the yearning, you can become *Paramhamsa,* though you may now be a novice or even a non-believer!

x x x

14. But, let me tell you that married life and being a *Grihastha* (householder) will not bar your way to Realisation. Look upon the wife and the children as a sacred trust, and serve them in that spirit. Prepare yourselves for a celibate and spiritual discipline from the age of fifty; the five senses have to be mastered, by the time five decades of your life are over. The conclusion of six decades means that you have conquered the six foes of man: lust, anger. greed, attachment, pride and hate. When you are seventy, you must have become ready to merge with seven sages, the seven seas and the seven colours of the solar ray; that is to say, you must be far, far above mundane desires and ideals, and as near the point of

mergence as possible, through Sadhana. Eighty must see you in line with the Deities that preside over the eight cardinal points, more or less Divine, in attributes and characteristics. Ninety takes you, or rather should take you to the realm of the Nine Planets, into the realm of the Super. When man reaches the hundred mark, living out the ten decades, he must have mastered the ten senses, of ten, the five senses of action and the five senses of knowledge and become Wisdom incarnate, with no trace of action or the consequences thereof or the desire for it. He and the Absolute are One and indivisible!

x x x

15. Without conquering your body, you cannot know the truth; in this way without conquering hunger and thirst, you cannot know the supreme reality; and if you do not have knowledge of the self, you cannot be called human.

x x x

16. What exactly is the aim and purpose of all the *Sastras,* the *Bhagavatham,* the *Puranas,* these discourses the Harikatha? Just try to answer that query. It is to tell man the truth about himself. There is no plot to mislead you. That is not the desire of

the sages who wrote down these annals and their own experiences. You know only the present, what is happening before your eyes; you do not know, the Present is related to the Past and is preparing the course of the Future. It is like the headlines and titles of a film on the screen; as the letters gleam one after the other, you read them and pass on to the next that comes to view. Each new letter or word wipes out the one already before your eye, just as each birth wipes out the memory of the one already experienced.

x x x

17. Man must proceed ever towards *balam (*strength); he should not take to untruth, wickedness, crookedness—all of which denote a fundamental fatal trait of cowardice, *(balaheenam). Balaheenam* is born of accepting as true, a lower image of yourself than what the facts warrant. You believe you are the husk, but, really you are the kernel. That is the main mistake. All Sadhana must be directed to the removal of the husk and the revelation of the kernel. So long as you say, "I am," there is bound to be fear, but once you say and feel, "I am Brahman," *Aham Brahmasmi*, you get unconquerable strength.

18. You can get the real urge and inspiration to serve others, only when you get rid of the identification with the body. When a man suffers from acute stomach pain, his eyes water. Why? Because, the various organs—eye, stomach, etc.—are all of the same body. So too, when one man suffers, your eye must shed tears and you must be urged to alleviate it. This will happen if you know that you and he are limbs of the self-same Divine Body. The *bheda-bhava* (feeling of separation) arises on account of the ignorance of the Truth. When people get angry, they gnash their teeth; but they take care not to bite the tongue, for the tongue is theirs; if by chance, the tongue is bitten, they do not knock the teeth out, for the teeth are theirs. So too, the sick man, the poor man, the illiterate man, the wicked man, are all limbs of the same body, of which we too are parts. The same current activates all. To realise this and to merge in that Unity is the purpose of this life in the human body.

    For this consummation, the seeds of *Vishayavasana* (attachment to sense-objects) have to be scrupulously got rid of. A field may look barren and dead; but the first shower of rain will convert it into a green carpet; the seeds of grass in the soil sprout at the touch of dampness. So too, at the first contact with temptation,

the *Vishayavasana* of people sprouts and prevents the growth of spiritual Sadhana.

x x x

19. Have faith in yourself, your own capacity to adhere to a strict timetable of Sadhana, your own ability to reach the Goal of realisation. When you have no faith in the wave, how can you get faith in the ocean? A small lump of steel can become a beautiful efficient watch, through the application of intelligence and skill; can man not be transmuted into a sage, who has realised the ultimate reality through the instruments of *Viveka* (discrimination) and *Vairagya* (detachment, renunciation)? The sacred books of all religions help man to reach his eternal Abode of Peace. All are caravanserais built to help the pilgrim on his way to the goal. He stays there for a time, he is instructed about the next stage of the journey, and, then he moves on refreshed by the stay.

Obstacles that come in the way are often treated with a certain amount of resentment by the pilgrims on the spiritual path, but these tests are to be treated as ensuring safety. You drive a nail into the wall to hang a picture thereon, but before hanging the picture, you try to see whether the nail has been well driven by shaking it. When you are certain it does not shake

even when all your strength is used, you become bold enough to hang the picture on it. You must welcome tests because it gives you confidence and it ensures promotion.

Do not give ear to what others say. Believe your experience. Whatever gives you peace and joy, *atmananda*, believe in that. That is the real basis for faith. Why should you go about asking all and sundry whether something is either salt or sugar? Is it not foolish to wander about consulting people about this? Put a little on your own tongue; that will settle the matter. What you are now doing is to reject as salt what your own experience has proved to be sugar, simply because someone, who has not tasted it like you, proclaims it to be salt or because someone who is down with fever finds the thing bitter.

x x x

20. As a result of the pilgrimage, your habits must change for the better; your outlook must widen; your in-look must become deeper and become more steady. You must realise the Omnipresence of God, and the Oneness of Humanity. You must learn tolerance and patience, charity and service. You must determine to seek, after the pilgrimage is over, and you sit in your own home ruminating over your

experiences, the higher, the richer and the more real experience of God-realisation. I bless you that you may form that determination and striving step by step, achieve that Goal.

x x x

21. An intellect that is moved only by Truth and a Consciousness that will not tolerate the impurity of meanness or vice—these two are the prerequisites for the fulfilment of the ideal. This is the *Aasthi* or wealth that will make a person an *Aasthika*! The intellect must investigate, as far as it can, the fundamental problem, why this birth, whither this life, whence this adventure, what the effect of human actions is on this life and on future lives, etc. Consciousness must dive deep into the Divinity that underlies it.

x x x

22. To achieve this great consummation, you must take one step after another. Good deeds like *puja*, and *japam, dhyanam*, the observance of vows, etc. are "steps"; good thoughts like prayers for greater discrimination, more chances to help others, also help. Slowly, steadily, cleanse the mind; sharpen the intellect; purify the senses; and win Grace.

x x x

23. Life is a mirage; it comes from no visible rain; it falls into no recognisable sea. There was a man once who was pestered by a host of relatives when he was dying. Parents, wife, children, brothers, sisters all surrounded his bed during his last moments and wailed. They asked him: "What is to happen to us?" The dying man lifted his head a little from the pillow and asked in return, "What is to happen to me? I am now more interested in that problem, than being worried about what is to happen to you." Well, it is better everyone asks that question even now and equips himself with the answer rather than wait until it is too late. "What am I for?" "What ought I to do?" These questions you must pursue, and arrive at the answers.

x x x

24. Do all acts, as offerings to God; do not classify some as "my work" and some as "His work." All work is His. He inspires, He helps, He executes, He enjoys, He is pleased, He reaps, He sowed. He also exists, for, all this manifoldness is but He seen through the mirror of Nature! Everything is for the attainment of the Supreme, to be utilised for that high purpose. Nothing is to be used as itself, for itself. For Sai *Bhakthas*, this is the only proper way of Life. No *padartham* (no object); all *pararthamm*

(only objectives). And the objective is Realising the Reality, that is, the Atma, God!

x x x

25. The only ache people have nowadays is the ache in the stomach, due to overeating and want of exercise! How will God reveal Himself when the seeker rides to His Presence smooth in a swell car, and sticks to his regular routine of luxury? Yearn to see the resident in the temple of your body. Do not merely yearn to keep the body safe, trim and coddled, in costly comfort. There are some ultra-modern *sadhakas* (aspirants) who do not want to cross their thresholds, or spend a paisa, or move a muscle, but who yet demand that Self-realisation must drop lightly on their laps, from the Guru or from God, whom he should be able to persuade or manipulate! And there are Gurus who cater to such, so that they can collect a pile!

x x x

26. When the magnet does not attract the needle, the fault lies in the dirt that covers up the needle. When the Lord does not approach the devotee, the fault lies in the heart of the devotee; it is not pure enough.

x x x

27. In fact, Puttaparthi is just 16 miles off; still I have come like this to Penukonda only twice—once when Krishnarao brought Me to preside over the District Athletic Competitions and now, when Krishnadevaraya brought Me! I am looking forward to share My *Anandam* with all, and so I feel that you have but to invite Me and I shall be with you. I know that you have not understood Me yet; you only see Me from a distance. See Me through the thousands who pass through your town to come to Me. If only you catch a little of their faith and joy, you will be amply rewarded. I have been worried—if worry is the name for that feeling—that while people from the farthest corners of this country and even from foreign countries are benefiting, the people of Penukonda are denying themselves the chance of sharing My *Anandam*. Penukonda, the town that derives its name from the mountain, has been too long a heap of stones, albeit a huge heap. Your hearts must become *kondas,* that is huge mountain peaks and on the top, as in Arunagiri, the *Jyothi* (light, radiant flame) of knowledge must shine like a beacon. Learn, experience and be happy. Control, canalise and secure. It does not matter a bit if you have no faith in Me or in God. Have faith in yourselves, that is enough. For, who are you, really? Each of you is Divinity, whether you know it or not.

x x x

28. The ancients have laid a Royal Road for cultivating the Spirit and achieving the Truth with that as the instrument. Why wander about in the thorny wastes, or slushy bylanes? Practise the Sadhana of *japam* and *dhyanam* as prescribed; know all about it, from pundits and others who have the experience. Do *puja* with flowers, *japam* with rosaries, etc., but, only until you get set for higher endeavours. You must offer the plant, not the flowers that plants grow; that will reward the plant, not you! The Lord wants you to offer the lotus that blooms in the Lake of your Heart, the fruit that ripens on the tree of your earthly career, not the lotus and the fruit available in the market place! You may ask; "Where can we find the Lord?" Well, He has given His address, in Chapter 18, Sloka 61 of the *Bhagavad Gita.* Turn to it and note it down. "*Iswarassarva-bhoothaanaam hrddese,* Arjuna, *thisthati*" (O Arjuna, the Lord resides in the heart of all beings). Now after knowing that, how can you look down on any living being in contempt or how can you revel in hating him or indulge in the pastime of ridiculing? Every individual is charged with the Divine Presence, moved by Divine attributes. Love, honour, friendliness, that is what each one deserves from you. Give these in full measure.

The Grace of the Lord cannot be won by a little pretence of *vairagyam* or just a grain of *vivekam.* Know and act; realise and experience; that is the hard path. Surrender yourself to His will.

x x x

29. The Atma (Divine Soul) is omnipresent; do not think it is found only in persons belonging to certain castes or colours or creeds; or that it is of a big size in fat people or of a brilliant nature in rich people. It is consistently *Sath* (Being), *Chith* (Awareness) and *Ananda* (Bliss) in every being. Sadhana has to go a long way to win this outlook.

x x x

30. You must grow day by day, not only physically but in the spiritual life also. How long are you staying on in the primary school, writing down the letters of the alphabet? Get up, demand an examination, pass, and move forward to the higher class!

x x x

31. The greatest obstacle on the path of *Saranagathi* (surrender) is egoism, *ahamkara* and *mamkara* (attachment). It is something that has been inhering your personality since ages, sending its tentacles deeper and deeper with experience of every

succeeding life. It can be removed only by the twin detergents of *Viveka* (analytical reasoning) and *Vairagaya.*

x x x

32. There are four things in which every man must interest himself: who am I, wherefrom have I come, whither am I going, how long shall I be here. The Four Vedas give the answer to these four questions. All spiritual inquiry begins with these questions and attempts to find out the answers. Suppose there is a letter put into the post box without the address to which it should go or the address from whence it has come. It will not reach anywhere. It is a waste to have written it. So too, it is a waste to have come into this world if it is not known wherefrom you came, whereto you go. The letter will go to the dead letter office! The *Jivi* (individual soul) will be caught in the cycle of birth and death and can never find itself. For this, *Atmavichara* (Inquiry into the nature of the Atma), and for the successful arrival at the correct answers, Sadhana is essential. The answers must become part of your experience.

x x x

33. When one has attained the state of realising the Divinity in every Being, when every instrument of knowledge brings the experience of that Divinity, when it alone is seen, heard, tasted, smelt and touched, man becomes undoubtedly a part of the Body of God and lives in Him and with Him. When this duty to your own progress is taken up you will get a new strength at the very first step; you will thrill to a new and purer joy; you will taste the fullness of Bliss; you will be refreshed by a new holiness.

x x x

34. The *Sadhaka*s (aspirants) in the midst of their efforts sometimes imagine God to be less glorious than He really is! They feel that the Lord differentiates between sinners and saints, good and bad, *jnanis* (wise, liberated persons) and *ajnanis* (ignoramuses). These are unsound inferences. The Lord does not separate men thus. If He really did so, no sinner can survive His anger on earth for even a minute. All are living on the earth, since the Lord has no such distinction. This Truth is known only to the *Jnani* (a sage possessing spiritual knowledge and experience). Others are unaware of this. They suffer under the false belief that the Lord is somewhere far, far away from them.

x x x

35. Self-realisation is either the knowledge that, " I am the truth of me" or "I have known Myself" or "All are one Atma" or "I have experienced that the individual and the universal are not distinct." This is what every person has to discover for himself; mere asceticism without this is sheer waste of time and energy. Man is not a mere animal. He has in him the spark of the Divine and he should not allow it to be extinguished.

x x x

36. What is the source of *Ajnana* (ignorance)? I shall tell you. It is the identification with the body, the delusion that you are the body. This can be removed only by the acquisition of right knowledge. To remove darkness, light is what is needed; you cannot frighten it away, nor can you make it yield by prayer or petition or protest. Unless light is on, darkness will not disappear, howsoever you may try. So too, *A-jnana* will not disappear, by merely wishing for disappearance. Once you understand the nature and ramifications of this trait, this *A-jnana*, the truth will be laid bare and grief will vanish.

x x x

37. The *Jnani* (a sage) is free from *Maya* (delusion); he is unaffected by the *Gunas*: *Rajas* (active,

passionate), *Thamas* (dullness, sloth) or even *Sathwa.* (pure). The *Jijnasu*, the seeker of knowledge, however, is different. He uses his time for unbroken contemplation of the Divine, in pious deeds and holy thoughts. And the other two, the *Arthaarthi* and the *Aartha* they gather elevating experience and ruminate over the real and the unreal and transform themselves into *Jijnasu*, seekers of knowledge. And later they become *Jnanis* and are saved. The goal is reached thus, stage by stage. You cannot attain the goal in one leap.

x x x

38. Ocean water is saltish when taken directly from the ocean and can be compared to *Sastra Jnana* or book knowledge. The water obtained from the river has changed in taste and is sweet. This water may be compared to *Anubhava Jnana* or wisdom obtained through experience. More than the knowledge that you can get from reading the *Sastras,* you should value the wisdom that you can get from experience. By taking the knowledge from the *Sastras,* you can convert it into wisdom of experience by putting the knowledge into practice in your daily life.

x x x

39. Although, as the equivalent of external application of medicines, we undergo certain practices and certain sadhanas, we also have to realise the inner meaning of such sadhanas and such practices. It is the realisation of the inner meaning of such practices. that constitutes the medicine that you take internally. The *Gita,* which is really the essence of all the Upanishads, teaches us how life has to be handled internally. It is in the 32nd stanza of the sixth chapter of the *Gita* that we are told how this internal cleaning or purification should be effected. Good qualities like kindness, compassion, *Prema* (Divine Love), and sacrifice, make a man deserving of being called a devotee or a *Jnani* or one who has attained *Vairagya* or detachment with the external world.

x x x

40. Several holy texts are exhorting us to find unity in diversity and recognise diversity in unity. This is being preached but we cannot find one person who by his action is able to drive home the truth into our hearts. If we want to recognise unity in diversity, we must first know the meaning of these words. We may easily say that the elimination of sorrow and acquisition of joy is the simple path which leads to spiritual illumination. Even in this regard we must know the nature of sorrow. Only then, can we

destroy or eliminate it. Sometimes, when we consider one experience to be sorrowful, after some time it may turn out to be a pleasurable one. And when we consider an experience to be a case of joy, it may turn out to be one of sorrow or anguish in due course.

x x x

41. All kinds of people now name themselves as *Jnanis*. They do not know, perhaps, that a *Jnani* is marked by certain characteristics. The mark that proves him genuine is, of course, his declaration based on his own experience that *Vaasudevassarvamidam*, (Vasudeva is all this). The steady assimilation of that experience is the true sign of the *Jnani.* By Vasudeva is meant here not the son of Vasudeva but He who perceives the Lord in all beings, His Home, His *Nivaasa*. It is only a person who perceives the Lord in all beings that deserves to be called a *Jnani.* Instead, if others name themselves as *Jnanis,* they are so only in name. They have no genuine experience of *Jnana* (wisdom). What exactly is that *Jnana*? It is the possession of that knowledge which enables you to have knowledge of all; and so enables you to dispense with the knowledge of all else.

x x x

42. You must engage yourself in *Karma-Jijnasa*, the discriminating selection of Karma or activity; then, you have to enter the region of *Dharma-Jijnasa*, the search for the eternal laws of the spirit, that mould and shape the waves of consciousness. Last, you penetrate into the problems of liberation through *Brahma-Jijnasa*, the Sadhana that convinces you of the reality of the One and the unreality of multiplicity, the apparent world, based on the real Brahman.

43. The wisdom that comes of actual experience is as the rain drop, when compared with the sea water which is saline and undrinkable. Through the interaction of the rays of the sun, the salinity was removed and the water that floated into the sky became sweet, and sustaining. Sadhana that turns the physical into the metaphysical is the solar action that confers potability.

x x x

44. Now a doubt may arise about the *Artha-bhaktha,* the one who turns to the Lord to relieve his suffering. The question may be raised whether such a person can be called *Bhaktha*. There is no single person on earth who is free from some want or the other. Each depends on someone or the other to fulfil his wants,

does he not? Now, to have such wants, wants relating to objects, is itself wrong; and to lean on a man like oneself to fulfil them is an even greater wrong. The *Artha-bhaktha* turns, not to man, but to the Lord whom he trusts and reveres; He implores Him only to fulfil them. Though it is wrong to cultivate wants, he avoids the greater wrong of putting trust on inferior instruments. So he is superior, is he not? The superiority of this attitude can be seen when you know that it is not what you want that is important, but whom you ask for its fulfilment. The goal is the Lord; He is the Giver. His Grace alone can confer boons. When this faith is fixed, you can be certain that the *Aartha-bhaktha* is really worthy.

The first three of the types of *Bhakthas* mentioned in the *Gita*—the *Aartha*, the *Aarthaarthi*, and the *Jijnasu* all adore the Lord in an implicit form, as *Paroksha*. (invisible) They seek the Lord as a means for the realisation of their desires or goals. Of course, they will always be in prayerful and worshipful mood and remembering the Lord at all times.

The *Jnani* (a sage), the fourth type mentioned in the *Gita*, has *Ekabhakthi*, while the others have *Anekabhakthi*; the others are attached to the objects

or the states they desire and for their sake are attached to the Lord also. They are devoted not merely to the Lord, but to the objective world also. The *Jnani* will not raise his eyes towards anything other than the Lord. Even if he does, he sees the Lord wherever his eyes are cast. That is the reason why the Lord has decreed that the *Jnani* is dearest to Him. Of course, all are the same for the Lord; but among those who have reached His Presence and are present there, Prema (Divine Love) is explicit, *prathyakshsa*, immediate, directly cognisable and experienceable. Therefore, it can be inferred that the *Jnani* is nearest to the Lord and so, the dearest.

x x x

45. Every sense is an outlet for the energy of man in a direction that binds him to the objective world. The senses are induced by the mind to move out and attach themselves to objects. Man must make the mind submit to *Viveka* or Intelligence which discriminates, and then, the mind will help, instead of harming him.

The body is the temple of God; He is resident in the heart; *Buddhi* or Intelligence is the Lamp lit in that altar; now every gust of wind that blows through the windows of the sense affects the Flame of the Lamp

and dulls its Light threatening even to put it out. So, close the windows; do not keep them open for direct attraction of objects. Keep *Buddhi* sharp, so that it may cut the mind like a diamond and convert it into a blaze of light, instead of being a dull pebble. Discrimination, *Nithyanithya-vasthu viveka* is an important instrument of spiritual progress. The reasoning faculty must be employed to distinguish between the limited and the unlimited, the temporary and the eternal. That is its legitimate use. Sankaracharya names his work on the principles of *Adwaitha* as *Viveka-chudamani*, for, he wanted to emphasise the value of *Viveka* for a realisation of the evanescence of life and the Oneness of the Universe.

46. The secret is, discover the fountain of joy within; that is a never-failing, ever-full, ever-cool fountain, for it rises from God. What is the body? It is but the Atma (Divine Soul) encased in five sheaths, the *Annamaya* or the one composed of food, the *Pranamaya* or the one composed of vitality, the *Manomaya* or the one composed of thought, the *Vijnanamaya* or the one composed of intelligence and the *Anandamaya* or the one composed of bliss. By a constant contemplation of these sheaths or *kosas,* the *Sadhaka* (aspirant) attains discrimination

to recede from the outer to the inner and the more real. Thus, step by step, he abandons one *kosa* after another and is able to dissolve away all of them, to achieve the knowledge of his unity with Brahman.

x x x

47. One has to practise detachment at every step, or else greed and miserliness will overpower the finer natures of man. That nature is Divine, because, God is the very substance of which man is but a name and form. To realise it, one has to possess and develop the Sadhana—*Chatushtaya: Nithyanithya Viveka* (discrimination between the unchanging and the changing, the permanent and the temporary) i.e., knowing that the *Jagath* or the Universe is constantly subject to change and modification and that Brahman alone is unmodified, *Ihaamuthara-phala-bhoga-viraga*: detachment from the pleasures obtainable in Heaven after attaining the conviction that they are evanescent and fraught with grief; *Samadamaadi-shatka-sampaththi*: and attaining the six desirable qualifications: the control of external and internal senses and sensory promptings, fortitude in the midst of grief and pain, of joy and victory; *uparathi,* withdrawal from all activity that brings about consequences that bind; *sraddha*, firm faith in the

teacher and the texts that he expounds; *samadhanam*, even contemplation on the basic Brahman, without being disturbed by other waves of thought. Though milk is under formation throughout the body of the cow, you have to resort to the four teats, in order to get it; so also, these four Sadhanas, or teats, have to be pressed (into service), if *Jnana* (wisdom) is to be gained.

x x x

48. Only by Sadhana can the secrets of either matter or mind be known, grasped and used, for one's benefit. In the *Vivekachudamani*, Sankara says, "If the *Nikshepa* or Treasure that is embedded in the bowels of the earth must be brought up, mere calling it up by name will not help. You must know exactly where it is, through the advice of experts. You have to excavate the spot; you have to move away rock and stone and sand that come in the way. You have to grasp it and heave it up to the ground." So too, the *Thathwa* (principle) of the Self has to be first learnt by means of instruction from a knower of Brahman; then the process of *manana* (reflecting), *dhyana* (meditation), *nididhyasana* (inner concentration) have to be gone through.

x x x

49. The only peace and joy that he gets now is of a momentary kind; here now, gone the next minute. Pain puts a stop to joy; joy is but the absence of pain. Why must man live for years—a burden on earth, so much of rice or wheat consumed year after year, with no return in joy or peace to himself or others? The petromax light will shine bright, only when you pump air vigorously, that is to say, engage yourself in Sadhana and illumine your mind better and spread light on all who come near you.

x x x

50. If only everyone examines these: what are my qualifications, what is my position? he can soon realise the cause of his downfall. Will a tiger, however hungry, eat popcorn or monkey nuts? Aim at the goal to which your lineage entitles you. How can the parrot taste the sweetness of mango if it pecks at the fruit of the cotton tree? Let your effort be in keeping with the dignity of the goal. Never slacken effort, whatever the obstacle, however long the journey.

x x x

51. The body is the vehicle which you have to use for attaining the State of Bliss, and so, it has to be kept safe and strong for that high purpose. It is an

instrument for Sadhana which has been earned by the merit of previous births. Every moment, it is proceeding towards dissolution and so time should not be wasted in vain pursuits. It is even better to think of the body as mean and low, rather than raise it to the level of the be-all and end-all of life. Treat it as a wound, which has to be covered by bandage (clothes), treated with drugs (food) and washed (drink). You can get rid of this inordinate attachment only by that method.

x x x

52. A man borrowed money from another and promised to return it at sunrise the next day. The other fellow asked, "But, how are you certain that the sun will rise tomorrow?" At this, the creditor retorted, "But, how are you certain that I will live to repay it or that you will live to take it back?" Everything about life is uncertain. So, march on, from this very moment, take at least a few steps towards the goal, while you can. That very attempt might induce the Lord to extend your stay until you attain the goal.

x x x

53. The *Ananda* (bliss) that you derive when you are good and do good must be enough inspiration, enough reward. Resist all temptation to fall into evil

company. This will confer on you self-respect; you will rise in your own estimation; you need not bend your head before anyone. If you live like that, that life itself is the best *Prachara* (preaching) for Me. When falsehood and malice are raving mad, take it as a test of *Viveka* and of your *Kshama.*

x x x

54. The mind too will disappear as soon as the inquiry starts, for it is like cloth composed of the warp and woof of yarn. Each yarn is a desire, a wish, an attachment. Remove them and the cloth vanishes. Delusion is the cotton, desire is the yarn, mind is the cloth. Through *Vairagya*, the warp and the woof can be pulled out. The *Sadhaka* must have as his security personnel, *Viveka* and *Vairagya*. Then he can move through the world unharmed.

x x x

55. In order to have a vision of God you have to purify the inner instruments and conduct a virtuous life. We should keep our intelligence disengaged from the worldly issues. Intelligence should not be made a tool to satiate physical and mental obsessions. On the other hand, it should be used for the revelation of Atma. It should only be a witness and remain unaffected by the surroundings. Then it is in a state

of *Nivritti*. In this context, sacrifice of work cannot be something which relates to *Nivritti.* Sacrifice of one's desires alone can be associated with *Nivritti.*

x x x

56. Renounce the idea of your being separate; see in all beings, yourself; and yourself in all beings. That is the highest renunciation, the renunciation of the sense of ego, which makes you cling to this temporary habitations this bundle of bone and flesh, shell with a Name and Form. Spiritual exercise consists of two things: Contemplation of God, and discovery of one's innate nature, or Reality.

x x x

57. Reduce wants, live simple, that is the way to happiness. Attachment brings sorrow in its wake; at last, when death demands that everything be left behind and everybody be deserted, you are over-powered with grief! Be like the lotus on water; on it, not in it. Water is necessary for the lotus to grow; but, it will not allow even a drop to wet it.

x x x

58. Just as you attend to the needs of the body, feeding it three times a day in order to keep it in good running trim, so, too, spend some time regularly every day to keep your Inner Consciousness also in good trim. Spend one hour in the morning, another at night and a third in the early hours of dawn, the *Brahmamuhurtha* as it is called, for *Japam* and meditation on the Lord. You will find great peace descending on you and great new sources of strength welling up within you as you progress in this Sadhana. After some time, the mind will dwell on the Name wherever you are and whatever you are engaged in; and then, peace and joy will be your inseparable companions.

x x x

59. The right kind of happiness is contained in our own mind and within our own thoughts. Without making proper use of our intelligence, without developing detachment of our body and without having faith in the Divine, we are not going to have the fruits of our actions. If you keep away from cleansing your mind and if you stick to sensuous pleasures, you will never have the fruit of your actions, even if you go on praying to God for His blessings.

x x x

60. Man wants peace, happiness and bliss for himself. These can be had by paying taxes in the form of meditation for peace, prayers for happiness and bliss and various other sadhanas for similar good things. In order to get what you want, you have to pay. If you work part-time, you get half pay. Today we show only part-time devotion but we want full-time reward for this part-time devotion. How can you get this? If you give only part of your mind and ask for full return of the grace of God, it is like asking for full pay for half work. If you recognise with the fullness of your heart that everything that you do is by God's grace, then surely full return will be given by God. You try and you will get it.

x x x

61. Sleep inside the mosquito curtain; the insects can do no harm: so also, do not allow the insects of *kama* (desire), *krodha* (anger), etc., to harm you. Get inside the curtain of *sadhana* while you are in the world. Be in the world, but do not let the world into you. That is the sign of *viveka.*

x x x

62. Live but once: so live so that you are born but once. Do not fall in love with the world so much that your false fascination brings you again and again into this

delusive amalgam of joy and grief. Unless you stand back a little away from entanglement with the world, knowing that it is all a play, whose director is God, you are in danger of being too closely involved. Use the world as a training ground for sacrifice, service, expansion of the heart, cleansing of the emotions. That is the only value it has.

x x x

# 3. Bhakthi, Karma and Jnana Sadhana

1. *Bhakthi* or devotion to God is not to be judged or measured by rosaries or candles, daubings on the forehead or matted hair or jingles on the ankles; purity of motives and intentions is essential, so that Prema, which is the one component of *Bhakthi* does not leak out of the heart. The genuine outer signs of *Bhakthi* are three: faith, humility and apprehension. Faith in the ultimate victory of truth and love; humility before elders and the wise; apprehension in the presence of evil; fear to mix with bad company, to enter into evil designs, to act counter to the whisperings of conscience.

   *Bhakthi* cannot come into man from outside him; it has to be grown from within by an effort to cleanse the mind, to know the nature and origin of man and the universe, to grasp the relation of man with all the external objects which now fascinate and foil him.

2. *Bhakthi* is to be identified as the discipline which removes egoism and the limitations of "I" and "Mine," That is the reason, why the *Bhaktha* is defined by those who know as one who is *A-vibhaktha* with God. At all times and under all conditions, one's acts and feelings must be God-centred. Instead, if you pray when overwhelmed by misery, worry and loss, "O God! Save me, rescue me from these," and when they pass, if once again you plunge into objective affairs enslaved by worldly aims, such conduct is reprehensible.

3. When you scatter seeds on the surface of the soil, they do not germinate. You have to keep them inside the soil. So too, *Bodha* (teaching) if it is scattered on the surface it will not germinate and grow into the tree of knowledge and yield the fruit of wisdom. Plant it in the heart, water the plant with Prema, manure it with Faith and Courage, keep off pests with the insecticides of *Bhajana* and *Sathsangh,* so that you can benefit in the end. You have not yet got started in Sadhana; still you demand *Shanthi* (peace); you demand Grace. How is it ever possible? Start! Then, everything will be added unto you.

4. Step by step, you reach the end of the road. One act followed by another leads to a good habit. By listening, you get prodded into action. Resolve to act, to mix only in good company, to read only elevating books, to form the habit of *Namasmarana* —and, then *Ajnana* (ignorance) will vanish automatically. The *Anandam* that will well up within you by the contemplation of *Anandaswarupa* will drive out all grief, all worry.

x x x

5. That nearness is won by Bhakthi (devotion), which cannot be steady except after getting rid of "I" and "Mine." When a prisoner is taken from place to place, he is accompanied by two constables, is he not? When man, who is a prisoner in this jail, moves from one place to another, he too is accompanied by *Ahamkaram* and *Mamakaram*, Egoism and Attachment. When he moves about without these two, you can be sure he is a free man, liberated from prison.

x x x

6. Many people think of God only when grief overtakes them; of course, it is good to do so; it is better than seeking the help of those who are also equally liable

to grief. But, it is infinitely better to think of God in grief and in joy, in peace and strife, in all weathers. The proof of rain is in the wetness of the ground; the proof of Bhakthi (devotion) is in the *Shanthi* (peace) the *Bhaktha* has, *shanthi* which protects him against the onslaughts of success as well as failure, fame, dishonour, gain and loss.

Bhakthi is the Ganga, *Vairagyam* (detachment) is the Yamuna and *Jnana* (wisdom) is the Saraswathi of this spiritual *Trivini* (confluence). *Jnanam* is the through-train; you just board it; that is enough, it takes you direct to the destination. Bhakthi is the through-carriage; though it may be detached from one train and connected with another, if you get into it, you need not worry; so long as you stick to your place, it is bound to take you to the destination. *Karma* (action) is the ordinary train; if you board it, you have to disembark, climb in and climb out at every junction, load your luggage and unload it, and do a good lot of work to reach your destination.

Bhakthi alone is enough, even to acquire *Jnana.* It ends in *Samadrishti* (equal sight) and it destroys egoism. *Jnana* too gives you these. Narada once offered to teach the *Gopis,* illiterate cowherd women that they were, the principles of philosophy,

*Vijnanabodha* as he called it; Krishna agreed. But, they said, "We do not care for your learning and your discourse. We see Krishna everywhere and in everything and so, we have no *Ahamkaram* (ego). We believe this is enough for us." Narada found that what they claimed was correct; so he left discomfited.

x x x

7. Each member of all living species has many-sided love towards its offspring and parents, comforts and guards its food and drink, its joys and plays. Each of these types of love or attachment has a distinct name suited to the objects on which it is fixed. It is called affection when directed towards offsprings; it is named infatuation when it is directed towards persons who are less fortunate; comradeship when flowing towards equals; attachment when extended to goods or places; it becomes fascination in some cases, friendship in others. When it is directed towards elders and teachers and parents, it becomes reverence, humility, etc.

But Bhakthi is a word that is used only with reference to love as directed to the Lord. When this love is broken up into many streams flowing in many directions and towards many points, it causes only

grief, for it gets fixed on mortal things of the moment.

Instead, allow the Love to flow single-pointedly to the Ocean of the Lord's Grace; this is the Sadhana called *Bhakthi.*

x x x

8. Bhakthi is the complete identification of one's mental activity with those of the ideal on which the attachments centred.

x x x

9. The best Sadhana is to discover your Atmic reality and to recognise your kinship in the Atmic fold with all others. The body has to be kept trim until that is achieved; its purpose too is just this. Keep it light and bright. It is a boat which can take you across the sea of illusion, of false multiplicity. Don't add to its weight, by attachment to things and others; then it is in danger of sinking during the voyage.

*Namasmarana* is the most effective Sadhana. Remember with each name the glory behind the names. Escape from the clutches of anger, jealousy, hatred, malice and greed. Do not seek to discover others' defects; do not delight over them; when

others point out your defects, be thankful; or, keep quiet as Buddha did.

x x x

10. If you must bring the power from the Power-house to your residence to illumine your place, you have to put up poles at regular intervals and connect the house with the power-house with cables. So too, if you must win the Grace of God, do Sadhana at regular timings and connect yourself with God by the cable of *Smarana.*

x x x

11. Know the Atma (Divine Soul) which is your Reality; know that it is the same Inner Force of this Universe. Let your intelligence penetrate into the Truth. Analyse yourself and discover the several layers of Consciousness, the physical, the sensory, the nervous, the mental, intellectual and arrive at the very core of even the last layer, the layer of Joy. The *Pancha Kosas* have to be transcended, so that you may attain your truth, which is Atman.

    The Atma can be grasped only by a sharpened intellect and a pure mind. How to purify the mind? By starving it of the bad food it runs after, namely objective pleasures and feeding it on the wholesome

food, namely, thought of God. The intellect too will be sharp, if it is devoted to discrimination between the transient and the eternal. Let your thoughts be concentrated on God, His Name and His Form; you will then find that you are always with the pure and the permanent; you will then derive pure and permanent joy. That is the reason why I attach so much importance to *Namasmarana* as a Sadhana.

x x x

12. Select one name and one form for *smarana* and *manana*; but, do not talk ill of other names and forms. Behave like the woman in a joint family; she respects and serves the elders of the family such as the father-in-law and his brothers, her own brothers-in law, but her heart is dedicated to her husband, whom she loves and reveres in a special manner.

x x x

13. The *japamala* teaches you the Unity, though it has 108 beads! If it is a *sphatika mala* (crystal beads) you can see the string running in and through each bead, the inner reality on which all this is strung! If the beads are not transparent, you still know that the string passes through, holds together, and is the basis for the *mala* to exist! Why 108 beads? 108 is

the product when 12 is multiplied 9 times. 12 is the number of *Adityas*, Luminaries that reveal the objective world, and so, symbols of the *Sakara* aspect (the world of name and form, of manifoldness, the seeming variety, the fleeting pictures); 9 is the screen on which the pictures appear, the basis, the rope which deludes you as the snake in the dusk, Brahman, the Nameless Formless Eternal Absolute. 9 is the Brahman Number, for it is always 9, however many times you multiply it! It is immutable, for 9 into any number adds up to 9 only. So, when you turn the beads, impress upon yourself the fact that there is both truth and travesty in the world, the travesty attracts, distracts and delights; is deceiving you, diverts you into devious paths; the truth makes you free!

Hold the rosary, over the middle finger, keeping the three *Guna* fingers together. This means that you are now transcending the world of attributes, and qualities, of name and form, of multiplicity that is the consequence of all this transformation, and proceeding towards the knowledge of the UNITY. The *Jivi* finger now slowly passes each bead towards the thumb (Brahmam), touching the tip of the Brahmam finger when the bead passes over, so that the mergence is emphasised with every bead and

every breath, for, while the fingers learn and teach the lesson, the tongue too repeats the *manthra* or the Name, with the *Pranava.* The *japamala* is very useful for beginners in Sadhana; but, as you progress, *japa* must become the very breath of your life, and so the rotation of beads becomes a superfluous and cumbersome exercise in which you have no more interest. *Sarvadaa sarva kaaleshu sarvatra Hari chinthanam*: Always, at all times, in all places, Hari (the Lord) is meditated upon. That is the stage to which the *japamala* should lead you. You should not be bound to it forever; it is only a contemplation. The belt has to be discarded when you have learnt to swim, the crutches when you are able to walk.

x x x

14. Most of us incline to believe in God if our desires get fulfilled, and decline to believe in God when the course of life runs contrary to our wishes. These considerations, in any case, have nothing to do with the truth about God. The evil propensities prone to become confirmed habits. The malady of these habits cannot be cured through mechanical sadhana. There is a small story for this. An individual was suffering from indigestion. He took several medicines in vain because the disease had become chronic.

However, fortunately for him, a saint came his way and suggested a cure for his disease. The saint told him to chew and suck the pieces of rock salt the whole day. On doing so for some time, he felt considerably relieved of his trouble. This person used to distribute sweets to the children on festival days. On one Deepavali day, he visited various shops and in every shop he found the *laddus* to be tasting bitter. This was on account of his sucking the salt. One shopkeeper who knew his habit of his sucking the salt suggested to him to wash his mouth before eating the *laddu*. Complying with the suggestion of the shopkeeper, he found the *laddu* to be sweet. In the same manner, while succumbing to your bad habits, you do not gain the sweet and sanctifying fragrance from the sacred company of the divine personalities that you come across. You can get benefit from the good company only after cleansing your mind. Then you can enjoy the bliss of Atma.

x x x

15. You should make an attempt to join the *sathsangh* and derive all the benefits that accrue from joining good company. Good company leads you to

detachment and by detachment you will achieve self-realisation.

x x x

16. Never yield to indolence or despair. Suffer loss and grief gladly; they help to toughen your personality. The diamond is found amidst rocks; you will have to blast through the vein to get gold. Follow the strict regimen that the doctor enforces in order to make the medicine yield the best result. The battery of your "car" is charged when you come to Puttaparthi or when you go to some other holy place. Or at least that should be the aim of pilgrimage. Charge the battery of your Sadhana and then, after you return home, do not keep the car idle. If you do, the battery will run down. Take the car around and keep it going; then the battery will charge itself. So also, if you do not continue the *Sathsangh* (company of the good), the *Sathpravarthana* (good attitude), *Bhajana* and *Namasmarana*, then all this charging becomes a waste.

x x x

17. Today is the fourteenth day of the dark half of the month when the moon is all but invisible. Just a minute fraction remains visible to man. The moon is

the presiding deity of the mind. The mind is the source of all entangling desires and emotions. The mind is, therefore, almost powerless this day; if only this night is spent in vigil and in the presence of the Divine, it can be fully conquered and man can realise his freedom. So, every month, the fourteenth day of the dark half of the month is prescribed for more intense sadhana and once a year, this *Mahashivarathri*, the Great *Shivarathri*, is laid down for the Great Consummation. Vigilance this night is to be secured by sadhana, that is, by means of *bhajana* or the reading of sacred texts or listening to the reading of such texts; not by attending film-shows, or gambling, or playing cards. Be engaged in seeing good, listening to good, speaking good, doing good; that is the programme for the vigil, tonight. Make it also the programme for your entire life.

x x x

18. Bhakthi is the state of mind, in which one has no separate existence apart from God. The *Bhaktha's* very breath is God; his every act is by God, for God; his thoughts are of God; his words are uttered by God, about God. Like the fish which can live only in water, man can live only in God in peace and happiness. In other media, he has only fear,

frantic struggle, failure. The *Nandi* or Bull is the lower nature of man; when it is used as the vehicle of God, it secures a place in front of the central shrine of God; and it shares some of the adoration offered to God. It is only association with the Divine that can confer value and significance.

x x x

19. Keep yourself surrounded always by persons devoted to the higher life: persons who will encourage you to move forward along the road towards the goal. By these means, you can achieve *chithasuddhi.* the cleansing of the mind so that the Truth can be clearly reflected therein. *Sathsangh* leads gradually to withdrawal from the entangling activities. When a cold bit of coal is placed in the midst of glowing cinders, and when the fire is fanned, the coal too gets glowing with fire. *Jnana-agni* or the Fire of Wisdom operates similarly.

x x x

20. Everyone is a sadhu, for he is *Prema Swarupa* (Embodiment of Love), *Shanthi Swarupa* (Embodiment of Peace), *Amritha Swarupa* (Imortal Nature). But, by allowing the crust of ego to grow thick and fast, the real nature is tarnished. By the

action of *Sathsangh,* the company of God-minded persons, by systematic attention to self-control and self-improvement, man can overcome the delusion that makes him identify himself with the body and its needs and cravings.

x x x

21. *Sathsangh* makes you meet with other souls (individuals) of a like nature, and creates the contact that manifests the inner Fire.

*Sathsangh*, means, meeting the Sath, the Sath which is spoken of while extolling God as *Sath-chith-ananda* (Being, awareness, bliss). *Sath* is the Existence Principle, the IS that is the basic truth of the Universe. Align with the Truth, the *Sath* in you, the *Sathya* (truth) on which the *Mithya* (mixture of truth and falsehood) is imposed by minds that do not see light. By dwelling in that *Sath*, the flame is lit, light dawns, darkness flees and the Sun of Realisation rises (*Jnana Bhaskara*).

x x x

22. When an individual is born as an ignorant person, there is a process by which he can purify himself. This process consists of seeing good people, listening to good people, speaking to good people

and following the advice of good people. This process can convert you from being an ignorant person to being a *Paramahamsa* or a knowledgeable person.

x x x

23. Without Karma (action), progress is very difficult. The *jnani* (a sage) too has to do Karma, but, like swans coming out of the water, they can swish their feathers and wings and be as dry as when they entered it: Karma will not affect them at all. They do it with no ego, with no desire. It is their nature to wish well of the world and to engage in work that promotes the welfare of the world.

x x x

24. Sadhana is essential because the effects of Karma have to be removed by Karma alone, as a thorn is removable only by another thorn. You cannot remove it by a knife or a hammer, or even a sword.

x x x

25. The most tasty dish will become inedible, if a drop of kerosene falls on it. One bad Karma will spoil sadhana.

x x x

26. To gain success, discipline is indispensable. If we want to achieve success in this world, we must have self-confidence and then self-sacrifice. If we do not possess these three things, our life will be meaningless. When a river is erratically flowing, we construct a dam, change its course and divert it usefully and rightly before it flows into the ocean. So also all our ideas which are recklessly and aimlessly going in their own way, should be channelled by the construction of the dam of discipline. They should be made to take the form of sacrifice, and go into the ocean of *Atmaviswasa* or faith in one's self. We must regard it as absolutely essential to attain the three qualities—sacrifice, self-confidence and discipline.

x x x

27. You should never get into the habit of indulging in your desires. When one of your senses desires something, first discriminate if it is good or bad. If it is not good, leave it aside. Take it in only if it is good. A diabetic is very fond of sweet dishes. He should not eat sweets, but there is a strong desire to eat them. If he satisfies his palate by eating sweets, his health will be injured. Only if the action is desirable, you may go ahead with it. Otherwise, do not attempt action.

x x x

28. There are three kinds of sadhanas in order to develop an unwavering mind. The first the *Meena* Sadhana (like the fish). The second is *Mriga* Sadhana (like the animal) and the third is *Kurma* Sadhana (like the tortoise). *Meena* Sadhana can be explained by remembering that fish can survive only in water. The moment it is taken out of water, it perishes. Similarly, *Meena* Sadhana is one which can be done only in solitude. If you sit in public, the sadhana will not be successful. Being unable to concentrate when he mixes with other people and to be able to get concentration in solitude is called *Meena* Sadhana. The *Mriga* Sadhana (animal sadhana) is that in which one can get concentration on the earth only. You cannot go elsewhere, say into water, and do it. As in this case, there are some people who can get concentration only when they are sitting in company and among others. They cannot get concentration in solitude. If they are alone, they begin to think of their family problems. On the other hand, the tortoise can live equally well either in water or on earth. So, if we say that one's sadhana is like *Kurma* Sadhana or one is able to concentrate like a tortoise, we mean that the person is able to concentrate irrespective of whether he is alone or is sitting in company among the others. This is called *Kurma* Sadhana.

x x x

29. Those who seek Me are of four types. One is always worn out by ills that affect the body; he is the *Aartha.* Another is worried by the struggle for prosperity, power, pelf, property, posterity, etc. He is the *Artha-arthi.* A third yearns for the realisation of the Atma, reads the scriptures and sacred texts, moves ever in the company of spiritual *sadhakas,* acts along the lines laid down by the sages as *Sad-achara,* and is always motivated by the eagerness to reach the *Sannidhi* (presence) of the Lord. He is the *Jijnaasu.* The fourth is the *Jnani.* He is immersed in the *Brahma Thathwam.*

The first, the *Aartha,* worships Me only when he is in difficulty and suffers from grief or pain. When he prays to Me, I hear it and I satisfy him only in relation to that particular difficulty, that particular grief or pain. So too, when the *Artha-arthi* prays for riches or position or power or high status, I listen and award him only the particular thing he craves for. The *Jijnasu* is blessed with chances to do *Nishkama karma,* with a proper Guru as guide, with an intellect that is sharp enough to discriminate between Atma and *Anatma* (non-self), and thus helped to achieve the Goal. I bless him so that he is saved from distractions and helped to concentrate on the single aim of Liberation.

x x x

30. The art of engaging in Karma without getting involved in Karma, in the thing that has to be learnt. Karma has to be done, because it is part of one's nature, not out of any external compulsion. *Surya* is a *Sahaja-karma-chari*. He draws the vapours of water high up to form clouds which pours back as rain; no one taught him to do this. When you do the *Sahajakarma*, it won't be a burden. It is when you go contrary to it and do something out of the way that you feel the misery. The police constable's life is not *Sahaja*, so, he feels happy when he comes home, and doffing his uniform, gets into ordinary clothes. When the baby wails, all rush towards the cradle because its *sahajakarma* is to smile and be contentedly happy. So too, Karma done for the profit arising therefrom accumulates consequences which bind a man. It increases in size like a snowball, but Karma done without any thought of the fruit therefrom, keeps on diminishing and leaves you free from all consequence.

x x x

31. When the obstacles in the path of truth are laid low, deliverance is achieved. That it why *Moksha* is something that can be won, here and now; one need not wait for the dissolution of the physical body for that. Karma (action) must not be felt as a burden, for

that feeling is a sure sign, indicating that it is against the grain. No Karma which helps your progress will weigh heavily on you. It is only when you go counter to your innermost nature that you feel it a burden. A time comes when you look back on your achievement and sigh at the futility of it all. Entrust your mind to the Lord, before it is too late, and let Him shape it as He likes.

Assign to your mind the task of serving the Lord and it will grow tame. You do not hand over to the goldsmith an ornament that is quite nice; you give him for repairs or reshaping the ornaments that are broken or dented or gone out of fashion. So too, give the Lord your mind that certainly needs repair, if not complete reconstruction.

x x x

32. Man must engage himself in such tasks as will confer on him peace and lasting joy. Man must examine for himself the merits of various activities, and choose only such as will benefit him. He desires peace, but cultivates worry and anxiety. Planting a lime tree, he hopes to get mangoes therefrom. This is sheer ignorance or wilful blindness, or the result of misguidance.

x x x

33. The most direct method of spiritual success is *Nishkama karma*, action without any attention or attachment to the fruit therefrom—action as duty, action as dedication, action as worship. But, action and the fruit thereof are not two separate entities, the fruit is the action itself, in its final stage, the climax, the conclusion. The flower is the fruit; the fruit is the flower; one is the beginning, the other is the legitimate end. The flower becomes the fruit. The action becomes the consequence. One's duty is to act; act well, act in fear of God; act within the bounds of morality; act in love; continue acting; the consequences will naturally follow as the fruit follows the flower. One need not worry or exult. Act enthusiastically, with faith—success is yours. Arjuna acted so. He never lost heart, once the *Gita* was taught to him. He revived the drooping spirits of others. He engaged in battle, as dedicated in a *yajna*. But Karna, his great rival, had as charioteer a person called Salya. While the charioteer of Arjuna filled him with the highest wisdom and the deepest peace, Salya filled Karna with despondency and doubt. Salya means 'dart, arrow'; his charioteer became a thorn in his side, a weapon of death for Karna. Have the Lord as your charioteer; you can win through. Never select a Salya as your guide and preceptor.

x x x

34. Death is pictured by some as a terror-sriking God who rides a monster buffalo, and pounces on you with a noose. No, the noose is of your own making. He does not pounce; he gives advance notice of his arrival to take you—notice in the form of intimations like grey hair, falling teeth, failing vision, deafness of hearing, folding of the skin, etc. He does not ride any beast; he is only another name for Time. It is Time that creeps steadily towards you and shears the cord of life. So, utilise the capacity for karma with which you are endowed to liberate yourself from the clutches of Time. The law of Karma holds out hope for you; as the karma, so the consequence. Do not bind yourself further by seeking the fruit of karma; offer the karma at the Feet of God; let it glorify Him: let it further His Splendour. Be unconcerned with the success or failure of the endeavour. Then, Death can have no noose to bind you with. Death will come as a liberator, not a jailer.

x x x

35. Engage in some work which will take you out of your narrow self into the vaster magnificence; some task where you dedicate the fruit of karma to God, where you devote your time and energy to share your joy or skill or knowledge with fellow men.

x x x

36. Do not aspire to be a servant of God, working for wages; you reduce yourself to that level if you ask for this and that from Him in return for the praise that you offer or the sacrifice you undergo. Even if you do not ask, if the bargaining attitude is in your mind, or, if you feel disappointed that God did not give you desirable objects in return for all the trouble you took to please Him, do not calculate profit; do not count on returns; do not plan for the consequence; do, since you have to do, since it is your duty. That is real *puja*. Dedicate the deed as well as the consequence to Him. Then you become His own, not a coolie, demanding wages. That is the highest level a *bhaktha* can reach through sadhana. That is the reason why *Nishkama karma* is so highly extolled in the *Gita* by Krishna.

x x x

37. Engage yourselves in karma that will direct your intellect and mind along divine and sublime channels. Win grace through karma. If the lamp does not burn, it proves that you have not lit it. The Lord is neither benign nor malign. Your progress is reflected back as grace; your decline is reflected back as its absence. The mirror just reflects. It has no partiality or prejudice.

38. If you fan a person out of love, you can leave off when you must; but a *pankhawallah* accepting wages has to continue whether he likes it or not. Give up the desire for remuneration and you are free; accept it or ask for it and you get bound. That is the secret of *Karmaphala thyaga* (giving up all attachment to the fruit of karma).

x x x

39. The contented man is free, he does not depend upon others; he is unaffected by the feeling of agony. He is content with whatever happens to him, well or ill, for he is convinced that the Lord's Will must prevail. His mind is unshaken and steady; he is ever jubilant. Want of contentment is a sign of the *Ajnani* (ignoramus). Those who give up the *Purusharthas* (the goals of human life) and walk the path of sloth, how can they be said to be happy, whatever happens? Contentment is the treasure that is won by the *Jnani*; it cannot be won by the *Ajnani* who piles one wish on another, and builds one plan after another, who pines perpetually, worries himself and sets his heart ablaze with greed.

x x x

40. People talk of *Dravyayajna, Thapoyajna, Yogayajna*, etc. If a pit is dug, the earth excavated

becomes a mound by its side. There is no pit without a mound; when riches accumulate in one place, there must be corresponding charity too. The proper utilisation of one's riches is *Dravyayajna*. What is proper utilisation? Gift of cows, of lands, of skill are included under *Dravyayajna*. Again, when all physical activities, mental activities and speech are utilised for Sadhana, then it becomes *Thapoyajna*. How can it be *Thapas* (austerity) if you have lain down due to weakness arising from missing a meal? Doing Karma but yet remaining unbound by Karma—that is *Yogayajna*.

And *Swadhyaya Yajna*? It means studying with humility and reverence the sacred scriptures that lead you to liberation or Moksha. This study is the means to repay the debt due to the Rishis who put the Scriptures together. The next one is *Jnanayajna*. By this is meant not the knowledge of the visible and perceptible but the *Jnana* of the invisible, the imperceptible, the *Paroksha Jnana* (indirect knowledge), not the *Aparoksha Jnana* (direct knowledge). Listen to the *Sastras* that are related to this *Jnana*, study them and ponder over the teaching. In your mind, weighing the pros and cons: this is called *Jnanayajna*. *Jnana* also means the eagerness

to realise the *Atmathathwa* through inquiry from elders and those who have spiritual experience.

x x x

41. People go about the country pretending to be highly advanced experts in *Japa* and *Dhyana,* so then they can collect huge audiences. Spiritual attainment shuns publicity. Spiritual practice is to be done in silence away from public gaze. Some persons may claim to be superior or supreme, but though they have reached heights, their eyes are roaming like those of vultures, searching the plains for food; their thoughts are low. Save yourselves by your own effort; acquire discrimination and realise the Truth.

There are some who are attracted by various systems and methods, like *Hathayoga, Kriyayoga,* or *Rajayoga,* which claim to help people to realise the Self. None of these can make you realise God. The *Premayoga*—Discipline of Love alone can lead you to God. These yogas may calm the mind's agitations temporarily and may improve health and prolong life for a few more years; but that is all that they can do.

x x x

42. Man consumes as food many living beings, plants, eggs, fish, cattle, sheep, etc. They are born as human beings, on account of this act of consumption. But, since they have not had the education which can reveal the God within, they vegetate or stay brutish, without appropriate ticket or passport for rising higher than the human status in which they have been hurriedly placed. Like most men, they roll along from womb to tomb, bond-slaves to the senses and the ills that the bondage brings inevitably in its train. Do not be content with slavery; yearn to reach the Sun of Splendour, the Source of Perfect Wisdom. The seers and sages of India have laid emphasis on the discipline and prescribed measures to achieve the end. But, Indians have no knowledge of this discipline or of its value. Cynics and purblind critics discredit their ancient culture and point the finger of scorn at what they interpret as its absurdities and inconsistencies. Do not join such people in their campaign of vilification. On the other hand, attempt to assimilate the culture and yearn to experience the Bliss it promises. It is the half-baked variety of scholars and students that fall into the traps laid by the prejudiced and perverted. You may deny or dismiss God, out of ignorance or perversity; but, a day will come when you have to pray for his compassion.

God is subtler than ether, filling the smallest crevice with His Majesty. You have to outgrow the idols, pictures, and image; they are the kindergarten materials in spiritual school; seek to know the Divine Energy, that is burdened with no Name and no Form. Rise higher into the empyrean height of the Pure, Attributeless, Transcendent One.

x x x

43. You may ask "who is God?" Ask and receive the answer to another question "who am I?" This chance you have of a lifetime of mental and physical activity is a letter encased in an envelope which you have to drop into the red-box, called Nature (the Universe, Creation). You have to write there your real address, and where it has to go, which destiny this life has to attain. About life, the two fundamental questions are: From? To? And, for both, you have not discovered the answer, though you have grown to be pretty quick in asking a thousand other irrelevant questions!

God who is the origin and the goal can be cognised only by pure consciousness, after *chithasuddhi* is attained. Some weak-minded persons feel ashamed of themselves when they worship a picture. But, we are treating the picture as God, and not treating God as a picture. Worship the stone as God, not treat God as a stone!

Seeing alone is believing for these critics. Will they deny the sun in the sky, when the clouds hide it from view? It is the cloud of Maya, the curtain of confusion, that hides God from the consciousness of man. The form of worship that will bring the Grace of God in ample measure, is to obey the commands of God. Develop nearness, proximity, kinship with God. Win Him by obedience, loyalty, humility and purity.

x x x

44. *Prakruthi* is *Dhara,* Earth. Pine for *Dhara, Dhara, Dhara* and you find you are pining for Radha, Radha. So, Radha is the Becoming and Krishna is the Being: the desire of the Being to become, the longing of the becoming for the being—this is the Radha Krishna relationship, which has been sung by seers and poets, calumnied and caricatured by ignorant critics, appreciated and apprehended by aspirants, analysed and realised by sincere scholars of spiritual love.

You are the image of the supreme Atma, the image that is reflected in the body that is part of *Prakruthi* (nature). The Original Divine Spirit, the individualised spirit, which is the image, and the objective world of which the body is a part—these are the three entities called Iswara—*Jiva*—*Prakruthi*. Success in

Sadhana is won the moment you are able to either deny the objective world as a Delusion or recognise it as nothing but the Supreme Spirit itself. When the mirror, the *Prakruthi*, goes, the image *(Jiva)* also disappears. When the mirror is eliminated, two entities disappear, it and the reflection it can cast. And, you merge in the Divine.

x x x

45. Liberation comes through intellectual awareness of the Unity, that underlies the Diversity. Ganga is Karma, Yamuna is Bhakthi, and at Prayag, a third river joins them, to flow towards the Sea—the Saraswati, symbolising *Jnana* (wisdom).

Of the electric current, the positive and the negative together produce light. The positive pole is Grace, Divine Majesty, basking in His Glory. The negative pole is the consciousness "Not I" "Not Mine"; the denial of the deluding experiences of the waking, the dream and the deep-sleep stages, the destruction of the warp and woof of the mind, the process of weeding and cleansing.

The One is known by many names; the one is pictured in many Forms. There is only one Truth. People discern one facet at a time; their vision is too limited to see it whole.

Be sincere in your yearning and in your Sadhana. Formal scholarship and outward conformity are poor substitutes for real genuine devotion. Adore God, and fill yourself with thoughts Divine. That is the proper way to deal with life, not frittering it away as a fete of fancy.

x x x

46. Caught in the coils of the created, man is blind to the fact that he is part of the Divine Creator, identifying himself with the physical sheath in which he is encased. He is blind to the unity of all being, in the One Universal Absolute. Man indulges in dialectical rivalries and argumentation of the countless texts on spiritual discipline. But, he who puts at least a page or two of these tomes into practices is rendered silent, innocent of any desire for fame or victory. He is happy in the depths of his being. This is the message of the Rishis of the land.

x x x

47. Each man has three errors to correct; *mala, vikshepa* and *avarna. Mala* is the basic *ajnana* or ignorance which makes the tenth man (who counts the other nine and does not know that he is the tenth) declare that there is no tenth man. This *ajnana* or *mala* is the miasma that causes the declaration, *avarana.* And, *vikshepa* is the effect of that ignorance which

makes all the ten search in the river for the lost man. *Mala* is the consequences of Karma in this and in previous lives. This can be removed by *nishkama karma* (activity with no attachment to the consequent benefit or loss). The *avarana* effect can be overcome by the cultivation of *sahana* (tolerance) and *anyonyatha* (feeling of belonging to one another). If only the ten were bound together by mental solidarity, no one would have been taken as missing! So too, *Vikshepa* can be conquered by prema or love. Love would have revealed each to the other and no one would have been missed. This is the way to equip yourself with *Ananda*—the way of love, dedication and service.

Truth is the great purifier. *Manes Satyena Sudbyatha.* the mind is cleansed by Truth. It admits no dirt or sin, no defect or deceit.

x x x

48. Words that emanate from faith in God and the humility it fosters will render the atmosphere pure, while those trumpeted by vanity and execrated by nihilism and atheism will contaminate it. Use only such sounds as will cleanse the air. Praise the Lord, recite His Glory, that is the duty you owe yourself and others. The reason for the *yaga* is just this, every sound of the Veda is in praise of God and when the

Veda is recited, the atmosphere will certainly undergo a remarkable transformation and the men who breathe it will be a little less evil thereafter. Faith in God will instil faith in themselves and in others, and the world will be happier thereby.

When One's inner reactions and agitations are transmuted into Divine, all that one experiences through the senses, the mind and the intellect take on the Divine lustre, reveal their Divine core, and man is shaped in the mould of Love. One can be in the world but yet unaffected by it, provided this vision is gained. All activity will then be for the Almighty, by His Grace and through His Will. India has been reduced into a beggar-nation, since her children gave up these ideals and enthroned the ego, as the only God to be worshipped. India has always stood forth on the side of virtuous character, maintained through vigilance, in perfect trim. Without that steady strong character, achievements like scholarship, or *siddhis* or skill in Yogic convolutions are like plastic fruits, deceptive imitations incapable of yielding joy. When the mind is engaged in the recital of God's Glory, there can be no temptations to stray into the rake's highway of insane desire.

x x x

49. Nowadays, a man has got into the habit of acting and talking as his whims dictate. There is no control exercised by conscience or moral sense or manners. One who is perverse, who is determined to go down to his doom, needs no counsel. Medicine is for the ill, not for the wholly healthy or the wholly dead. Counsel is for those who suffer from doubt, anxiety or agitation. This counsel is contained in the *Sastras* and the sacred texts. A letter can be cast aside once its contents have been noted, and the instructions communicated through it have been grasped. So too, these *Sastras* and texts are to be laid aside once they are read, understood and followed. There is no purpose in reading them over and over again.

    The texts declare that you are really the Atma, the same that animates all creation. The body of man is a temple where God is installed. The guards are *Sama* and *Dama*, the control of the Senses and of the Emotions. If they are inefficient or idle, lust and greed, anger and envy, hate and pride sneak in, spread and hold sway over the temple; man is so deluded that he honours these thieves, as if they are the masters of the house they have stolen into. Be master of your own mind. Be awake, arise and confront the thieves, ere they capture your treasure. The Treasure is the Awareness of God in all.

x x x

50. The fundamental foolishness from which faults in character and conduct emanate is the belief that what one does is invariably right and just. This is the subtle effect of the virus, EGO. Whatever is to our advantage will appear right to us; we do not usually look upon a matter from the other fellow's standpoint. This leads to endless complications.

x x x

51. The sages have laid down three categories which comprise the knowable world. God, Nature and the "I." (*Iswara, Prakruthi* and *Jiva*) God, when seen through the mirror of Nature, appears as "I." Remove the mirror; there is only God; the image merges in the Original. Man is but the image of God. Even nature is but an appearance of God; the reality is He alone. The principle of Appearance that deludes as multiple manifestation is *Maya*. It is not external to God, it is inherent in God just as all powers are inherent in Him. When the "I" image is conceived as distinct, we have dualism, or *Dwaitham*. When it is recognised as only an unreal image, but yet, when it is given some relevance as related to the Original, then it is Qualified Monism, or *Vishista-adwaitham*. When both the "I" image and the Mirror are recognised as illusions and dismissed as such, only one remains, and this is the *Adwaitha*

*Darsanam*, the Vision of the One, without a second. The search for the One, without a Second, is the search of India since ages. The endeavour has always been to discover the One, which when known all else can be known. The knowledge that is worthwhile is the knowledge of Unity, not Diversity. Diversity means doubt, dissension, dispiritedness. The seen is different from the seer, that seer in everyone is the same.

Jesus Christ first said that he was a Messenger of God; then he announced that he was the Son of God, and still later he declared that there was no difference between him and his father and that both were One.

x x x

52. There are four stages in Sadhana. The first takes you to *Salokya.* You are in the Kingdom of God surrendering without any reservation. The next stage is *Sameepya*. You are in the palace as one of the servants. You are nearer to Him and develop Divine qualities. In the next stage, *Saroopya*—the *Sadhaka* imbibes the Form of the Divine; he is like a near kinsman of the King, entitled to wear royal robes and paraphernalia. Lastly, come the *Sajujya*, when as the Crown Prince he succeeds to the Throne and becomes Monarch himself.

x x x

53. The mind fixed in the awareness of the One is like a rock, unaffected by doubt, stable, secure. God, as amenable to worship and contemplation is referred to as Hiranyagarbha—Golden Womb, the Original of Creation, the Immanent Principle that has willed to become manifest and multiple. Whatever man may do with God, God is unaffected. He is Gold which subsists in and through all the jewels. God too is shaped by human imagination, inclination and intellect into various forms, grand or grotesque, frightening or charming. Man erects these images and pours out before them his fears, fancies, desires, dreads, and dreams. He is in you, and it is He that has prompted you to project Him into the outer world as this idol or that image to listen to your outpourings and give you peace. Without the inspiration, solace and joy that He confers from within, you will be raving mad, as one who has lost his moorings and is tossed about, rudderless on a stormy sea. Hold converse with Him, guide your footsteps as He directs, and you reach the goal, safe and soon. The picture before which you sit, the flowers which you place on it, the hymns you recite, the vows you impose on yourselves, the vigil you go through—these are activities that cleanse, that remove obstacles in the way of your getting aware of the God within. When the fascination for body goes, the

Light of the God within will shine and illumine your thoughts, words and deeds.

x x x

54. A life of Sadhana involves the dedication of all acts to God, the offering of whatever one does or thinks or speaks at the feet of God.

The mind must revolve round one centre, God. Your concentration must be strong and steady. Why have you to struggle to acquire it? The reason is: you have no yearning, no fond attachment, no Love towards God. But, carry on with the endeavour. By means of continuous culture, it is possible to acquire.

Sadhana is a uniquely precious activity which will be vulgarised by public gaze. Fish is sold in open shops, or in open day light by the side of thoroughfares. Diamonds are, however, sold in shops that admit only genuine purchasers, and they are kept in strong underground vaults. Sadhana is more valuable than diamonds. It will wither in the open.

x x x

55. The Tree of Creation is hanging down with its roots in Heaven (*Beejam mam sarva bhuthanam*); or else, it will dry for want of sustenance. It is called

Aswatha, the Horse Tree, for *Aswa*, or horse is, in Indian tradition, the symbol of restlessness, wavering, agitatedness. The Banyan Tree which is the Aswatha shivers in every leaf, with the slightest whisper of wind. The inner meaning or the great rite Aswameda or Horse Sacrifice is the destruction of the wayward mind, the Aswa! The mother feeds the baby using many tactics; but, later, through the force of habit born out of daily exercise, it starts feeding on its own. Take the mind to God and keep it there for a short time every day, morning and evening. God is so merciful that He will come ten steps towards you if you take one step towards Him.

True love can only be love for God, not any other love. These days it is common experience to find children love their fathers only as long as the fathers are earning. But once the fathers have become old and retired from service, their advice is ignored. Similarly, the love between husband and wife keeps waning with the passage of time. The true love is one which remains unchanged and that is the love for divinity. Have belief in yourself. Then you will have belief in God.

x x x

56. If God does not hold you, you fall. Whatever you do, wherever you are placed, believe that God has

put you there for the work. Then, it becomes an education, a Sadhana. Everyday, with every act, every thought, every word, you must approach nearer and nearer God. That will give you the greatest Bliss. That will confer true Liberation.

The Atma is God, the Particular is the Universal, no less. Therefore, recognise in each being, in each man, a brother, the child of God, and ignore all limiting thoughts and prejudices based on status, colour, class, nativity and caste. Enter the objective world, after becoming aware of the Atma, for then you see Nature in a new light and your very life becomes a long festival of love. The ideal of a high standard of life, instead of a high level of living, has played havoc with human society. A high level of living insists on morality, humility, detachment, compassion. Now, man is the slave of his desires; he finds himself helpless to conquer the thirst for pleasure and luxury: he is too weak to keep his nature under control; he does not know how to arouse the Divine Consciousness that is latent in him. It can be done only by Spiritual Sadhana. For, it is a basic transformation.

No one yet knows the mystery of the electric current, why it behaves so, what is the exact nature of its origin and flow; but yet it is manipulated into a thousand uses, and it is manifesting through a

thousand appliances and instruments. So too, God is present everywhere; but we can understand only that part of Him that manifests before our cognition. Ordinary people will swear that the earth does not move at all; it is held forth in poetry as a symbol of stability. But, it has two motions, both unbelievably fast! It rotates on its own axis at a speed which exceeds a thousand miles per hour; even while rotating so, the earth moves round the Sun at an astonishing rate of speed! But, do we notice it while it happens? God too is a reality, ever present in us and in every being; but we miss Him as we miss the movement of the earth. We have to infer God through proofs and evidence of His Providence, His Grace, His Majesty and His Glory, just as we infer the movements of the earth, the moon and the stars, by watching the sky, the seasons and the precise procession of day and night. We cannot describe God in the vocabulary learnt upon the earth. We have to experience the Bliss or realising Him as the core of our being. A true devotee will be steadfast in faith and pray to the Lord, not for *padartham* (things, material objects or the fulfilment of worldly desires), but *Para artham*, the happiness that is super-worldly. When you manifest Prema (Divine Love), you are only expressing God, the indweller of your Heart.

*Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavathi*—He who knows the vastest becomes the vastest, say the Rishis (sages). The Vedic statement that All is Brahman (*Sarvam Brahma mayam*) is the key to understanding the Universal Eternal Principle. Brahman is the Reality of the seeker, the cosmonaut, the person who asserts its existence as well as the person who doubts or denies. To say that the Divine is a fiction of someone's fancy is to be false to one's own genuine truth. The Divine is what integrates and unites all the diversity into one single essence. One must sharpen the intellect and widen the imagination to be able to conceive of Brahman, which is subtler than the subtlest, vaster than the vastest. Brahman is the very urge behind all aspiration and all achievement, even the aspiration to know Brahman. It is the activity in every atom and cell, as well as in every star and galaxy.

x x x

57. *Udyogam purusha-lakshanam. Udyoga* means, as is commonly understood, employment in some job, something that is worth doing. No. It means *ud* (higher) *yoga* (spiritual discipline), a sadhana which has assumed the status of a job. All jobs which you take up are *udyogas*, higher disciplines which mark out (*lakshanam*) the Purusha (the man). it becomes

*parama-purushartha*, for it is oriented towards the *para* or the higher eternal values. Your *nithya jeevitha* (daily living) must be transformed into live prayers and live Sadhana. Of the many billions of living beings, man alone has the privilege of being entitled to investigate the Truth of the Universe and to merge in the Bliss of its Realisation.

x x x

58. Devotion grows into wisdom, Bhakthi grows into *Jnana*. Bhakthi is as necessary and as inevitable a process as childhood. Devotion fosters the highest virtue. The years of life spent without the light of Love are years of ruin, of dust and disease. One could as well be dead, and decay forever. Prema or the Highest Love transcends the ego; it is pure, it is sweet, it is sacred and sanctifying. The Love that surges in your heart towards God must flow towards all, for, all are embodiments of the self-same Divine. The evil in you will manifest as obstacle in your path towards peace; they are set there by your own feelings and impulses.

The One is shining in and through the many, the one is the Many. *Ekoham bahusyam*. the One decided to be many, to enjoy its own manifoldness. The One appears as all this diversity. That is the Truth. The insistence on the fundamental unity of all creation is

the special feature of Indian thought. Do not be satisfied with paltry scraps of information; seek the knower behind the knowing process. That is the real victory.

x x x

59. All that man does is ultimately traceable to earn self-satisfaction. A man builds a house, writes a book, enters a job, executes a plan all because he gets joy therefrom. The various disciplines undergone by *sadhakas*, monks, ascetics, and those on the march along the path of self-knowledge are all adopted and adhered to, because they give joy to oneself and fulfil an inner need.

The world is the playground of *Nara* (man) and Narayana (The Creator), *Nara* transforming himself into Narayana and Narayana transforming Himself into *Nara*, and playing their roles in unison. Narayana has come in human form for re-establishing Dharma in the world, for feeding the roots of faith in God and for interpreting God to man; it is natural for man too to raise himself up, through spiritual discipline, moral elevation, expression of love and other means to become Narayana. But, man is unaware of his high destiny and slides down the scale into a monster or a monkey. Devotion must persist and flourish, unaffected by time, place or circumstance.

x x x

60. The fruit, the pot and the jewel are "effects"; there can be no effect without a "cause." The seed, the heap of clay and the nugget are the material causes; the gardener, the potter and the goldsmith are the instrumental causes, the manipulative causes. So far as the creation of the manifoldness of the Universe is concerned, we call Him, God. When the cosmos manifested through the will of God, it arose from the Absolute only, since there was then only One; even now there is only One, in spite of all this seeming variety. We have superimposed on the One, the illusion of the Many. When the pictures are seen, the screen is unseen; when the screen is seen, the pictures are unseen. But, without the screen (Brahman), the pictures have no meaning, they carry no message, they impart no *Ananda.*

God therefore is the material cause as well as the instrumental cause; the gold and the goldsmith, the potter and the clay, the seed as well as the tree, and all beings. Nature is his body; the Cosmos, is His Will, the Vedas are His Breath. The Sankhya School of thinkers declare that the objective world arose out of the conglomeration and conjunction of desperate atoms; but, they do not explain what induced the atoms to join with their kin in particular designs and groups. How does this urge arise? These questions

are bypassed. Most philosophers, especially in the West, ignore this problem of identifying the Cause of all the effects we find every moment all around us. God willed and became all this in response to that Divine Desire, the Primal Urge. He is therefore the *Anthar-atma* (the Inner Reality) and the *Anthar-Yamin* (the inner motivator). The Vedas declare, "All this is Vasudeva, God"; there is not the slightest trace of manyness here; there is only One without a second. Realising and experiencing this basic Truth, becoming blissful and aware of one's native Divinity is the Victory that the Prashanthi Flag denotes.

x x x

61 Indian Culture has laid emphasis on four *Ashramas* or stages of Individual Development in order to assure everyone with the education needed to know himself. For *Atma-vicharana, Ashrama dharma* is very essential. This adherence to regulation and prescriptions of conduct and study assigned to each stage or *Ashram,* the earning of knowledge and wisdom is made easy and automatic. Wisdom can come only through work as worship; the *Ashram* guides man to sublimate all activity into worship. Just as we have four stages—childhood, youth, middle age and old age—we have four corresponding *Ashramas: Brahmacharya, Grahastham,*

*Vanaprastham,* and *Sanyasa*—Studentship, Householdership, Recluseship, and Monkship. The *Sastras* lay down the lines along which man has to divert his thoughts and activities. Sincere adherence to these laws and limitations alone can guarantee wisdom or *jnana.* Otherwise, man drifts aimlessly along the crosscurrents and whirlpools of life and ends up ignorant, both of the nature of the *Loka* (world) and the glory of *Lokeswara* (God). Because these obligations have been neglected for some generations, the forces of atheism have earned strength now. You cannot separate the rind, the pulp and the seed that a tamarind fruit has, when it is still green. But, once it has ripened, the separation is quite easy. So too, until a person becomes ripe in experience and can be pronounced wise, be cannot discard his identification with the body, the senses, and the mind. He will not be able to differentiate between Atma and non-Atma, *Kshetra* (the field) and *Kshetrajna* (the knower of the field), *Prakruthi* and *Paramatma, Gnana Trana—Guna* and such other entities. The story of *Kalinga Narthana* of Lord Krishna signifies that in the Mind-lake (the *Mana-Sarover*) of man, there lurks a poisonous serpent, Desire. When that is destroyed, the various frailties and frivolities, triumphs, trials and failures, pains and pleasures, that Desire brings in its train,

surrender to God. Desire can be killed only when faith in the Atma, as the very core of being, is firmly established. The individual is intimately related to society and so, his restlessness affects the society too. The four *Ashramas* have been devised in order to awaken man into the *Jnani* stage. The praise, the habits that people adopt today as "modern" or "conductive to progress" is ridiculous to say the least. The ancients emphasised food habits and recreation habits to become *Sathwic,* such as cannot arouse and feed the passions of man or make him dull and stupid, idle and listless.

x x x

62. All things in creation are subject to the law of change and man too is subject to this law. But, man should use the law for progress, and not for sliding down in the scale. *Adhyatmic* intelligence leads man ever on the path of renunciation and service, for they alone lead to spiritual advancement. The *Adhyatmic* intelligence recognises the Unity of Creation like the string that runs through each flower, the *Brahma Suthra.* When you win the Love of God, His compassion will flow unto you. Vyasa, who wrote the eighteen voluminous *Puranas,* summarised all in one single line of a small couplet: "Doing good to others is the only meritorious act, doing evil is the

most heinous sin." When you feel you cannot do good, at least desist from doing evil.

x x x

63. We who are crossing the ocean of *Samsara* (the chain of birth and death) need to cultivate the art of swimming through *Bhagavatha-chintana* (Meditation on God). However learned we may be, if we do not have the training and cultivation, we are bound to sink. Life is a boat which enables us to cross the ocean of *Samsara* with the aid of meditation on God. *Vairagyam* or detachment does not imply renunciation of family ties and fleeing into the loneliness of the jungle. It means our giving up the feeling that things are permanent and capable of yielding supreme joy.

x x x

64. *Chith* and *A-chith* are grades, slowly passing from one to the other, from the less intelligent by the fully intelligent. In fact, there are three grades and not two. (1) The *Suddha Thathwa* is what Christ referred to as the Kingdom of God. It is far, far beyond the reach of Mind. It is the realm of pure equanimity. (2) *Misra Thathwa* is the earthly kingdom, alternating between repose and activity, sloth and adventure, *Thamas* and *Rajas*. While the

first is spoken of as the *Nithya Vibhuthi* (the Everlasting Glory of the Divine), the second is spoken of as *Leela Vibhuthi* (the scene of the ever-changing, ever-fresh sport of God). (3) *Vasana Thathwa* is the region of inactivity, ignorance and inertia, the *Thamo Guna.* The Universe is the Field where God sports. Be aware of this fact, and there is nothing more you need for a happy existence. Krishna has said in the *Gita* that He is ever by the side of the joyous being. To limit oneself and be happy while self-centred, is bad. *Vasana Thathwa* is when your narrow selfishness will take charge of you, and enslave you. *Vasana* is the ingrained face of aeons of enslavement to the senses. You have to overpower its subtle impact and liberate your will from its hold. Cultivate the attitude of unattachment, of neglect, of bypassing the urges through prayer and systematic practice. When you have the Vedantic Vision, the place where you are will thereby be the Kailas for you. The waves belong to the sea, but they cannot claim the Sea belongs to them. The individual can say "I am Yours," to God; he cannot say "You are mine," to God. God is the support, you are the supported. The *Nithya Vibhuthi* is the support of the *Leela Vibhuthi.* The sea is the base on which waves happen. When *Leela* entices God, it takes eight forms: *Suddabrahma mayi* (Pure),

*Characharamayi* (the moving and the movementless), *Jothimayi* (the luminous), *Vangamayi* (the vocal), *Nithyanandamayi* (the ever-ecstatic), *Parathparamayi* (transcending this world) and the next, *Mayamayi* (enrapturing by its charm), and Srimayi (resplendent with wealth). The attributeless God assumes the Mind, the Intelligence and the Ego, and the magnificent *Leela* is inaugurated. Dream experiences disappear when sleep intervenes. Being too is lost in becoming.

x x x

65. God is *Mahasakthi* and the *Jiva* is *Mayasakthi,* He is the Genuine, the *Jiva* is the shadow, the appearance, the delusion. In this world, which is impermanent and ever transforming, the immanent Power of the Lord is the only permanent and fixed entity.

x x x

66. While proceeding along the road, you can watch your shadow falling on mud or dirt, hollow or mound, thorns or sand, wet or dry patches of land. The shadow and its experiences are not *Nithyam* (permanent) or *Sathyam.* Similarly, you must get convinced that "you" are but the shadow of the *Paramatma* and you are essentially not this "You" but *Paramatma* itself. That is the remedy for

sorrow, travail and pain. Of course, it is only at the end of long and systematic process of Sadhana that you will get fixed in the truth; until then, you are apt to identify yourself with this body and forget that the body, which casts a shadow, is itself a shadow.

x x x

67. *Paramatma* draws the *Jivathma* towards itself; it is the nature of both to have this affinity; for they are the same. They are like the iron and the magnet. But if the iron is dusty and covered with layers of dirt, the magnet is unable to attract. Remove the impediment; that is all you have to do. Shine forth in your real nature and the Lord will draw you into His Bosom. Trials and tribulations are the means by which this cleansing is done.

Just as cane does not yield sugar juice unless it is crushed, as the sandalwood does not give the fragrant paste unless it is rubbed on the stone, the goodness of people does not come out unless they go through difficulties, experience of the buffettings of the world. From *Ashanthi* you get *Prashanthi,* from *Prashanthi, Prakanthi* and from *Prakanthi Paramjyothi.* It is like the alternating of night and day, this recurring of joy and grief. Welcome disappointments, for they toughen you and test your

fortitude. The ills dray you nearer God making you call on Him always when you are in difficulty.

Love God, though tribulations may be your lot, love Him though you are refused and rebuked; for, it is only in the crucible of travail that the metal is purified and cleared of blemish.

The saints Jayadeva, Tukaram, Kabir, Gouranga, Ramakrishna, Ramadas, all had to go through travail and tragedy, so that they could see God and merge in Him. They have won permanent niches in the temple of human memory. Ridicule and contempt must be met with joyous unconcern. Even Avathars (Incarnations of God) have not been free from such mean tactics from small men.

The *kokil,* when seen, is pursued by crows which try to wound it. Good men are the target for malignity of the small. The good are always the target of malice and envy, slander and abuse from the wicked. Krishna had to encounter the obstacles from the very cradle, right up to the finish of His life of on earth. Personal spite, false slander, unfounded abuse and defamation followed Him at every step. Demons who could not tolerate the Light and Love that He cast around Him conspired to tarnish His Name and obstruct His Mission. They tried to bind Him to fail His plans and pervert His instruments. But, Truth

triumphed and falsehood stood exposed and disgraced. Truth may be clouded for some time by the fog of slander; but, victory is certain. The forces of hate will be defeated by their own viles; they dig for their own downfall; their actions result in reactions, ruinous for themselves. Persons who cannot tolerate the Glory of the Avathars have indulged in vile campaign in every Age! Do not lend your ears or mortgage your minds to purveyors of scandal or lies, You must see the Truth that is covered by all the tales and legends that tarnish the Name.

The enemy takes delight in abusing you and it is said in the *Puranas* that as a consequence, he goes on diminishing and wiping off from your account the demerits you have to live out in misery. The faster and fouler his abuse, the sooner and better are your future prospects brightened. The enemy absorbs your sins and their effects.

Some of you feel neglected by Swami when some disappointment or trouble comes upon you. You must welcome such obstacles, for, they alone can toughen your faith firmer. When you hang a picture on the nail driven into the wall, you shake the nail and find out whether it is firm enough to bear the weight of the picture, don't you? So too, the nail (Name of

God) driven into the wall of the heart has to be shaken by means of a disaster or two.

x x x

68. You complain your neighbour secured happiness while you are miserable. Your neighbour may have to his credit several years of sadhana stored up in the Causal body into which he came, from his previous birth to his present one. Your nature and your predilections are shaped by the way in which you loved and wrought, fed and fought, in the long series of lives you had already.

God is not involved in either rewards or punishments. He only reflects, resounds and reacts! He is the Eternal Unaffected Witness! You decide your own fate. Even creation, protection and destruction follow the same law, the innate law of the maya-ridden universe.

There are people who go about declaring that there is no God, because they are not able to see Him. Do you assert that there are no roots for trees, that nothing feeds them or upholds them from below? God feeds, sustains, holds firm unseen. He can be seen by those who make the effort, along the lines laid down for the purpose by those who have succeeded in experiencing Him. God is, as butter in milk, visible when concretised by sadhana!

x x x

69. The attribute by which *Akasa* (sky, ether) can be cognised is *Sabda* (Sound) or the Word! In the beginning was the Word! The word became the object, it got embodied, concretised. That is why we call "object" as *pada-artha*, *pada* means word, *artha* means meaning or purpose. The "object" is the purpose for which the word was uttered, the meaning which makes the word valid. The word God too is the indication that there is the *Padaartha*— that there is God. If there was no God, the word God would not have originated and gained currency. You may see God or you may not, but the word is proof that there is God.

This God has to be visualised by means of constant spiritual discipline. Do not involve yourselves in doubts and hesitations. If only you observe the discipline and purify the consciousness, you can see the God, installed in your heart. There is sugar in the cup, but the water is insipid, for, you have not stirred it well. Sadhana is the process of stirring. Saturate every moment of life with God, it becomes sweet thereby.

If you declaim that God is nowhere, you are installing night in your heart and making it ready for dark schemes and misdeeds. To see Him as a concrete entity, you have to follow a prescribed

procedure, earnestly, strictly and sincerely. Then, at the end of it all, you can experience His Grace and His Glory.

The nature we have around us and with us is the vesture of God. We have all around us, in the atmosphere, the music emanating from all the broadcasting stations of the world; but they do not assail your ear at any time. You are not aware of any station. But if you have a receiver, and if you tune it to the correct wave length, you can hear the matter broadcast from any particular station. So too, the Divine is everywhere above, around, below, beside, near as well as far. For cognising it you require not a *yantra* (machine) but a *manthra* (mystical formula, potent with psychological undertone). Concentration or *Dhyana* is the fixing of the exact location of the station in the band; Love is the correct tuning in realising the Reality, and the Bliss it confers is the happy clear listening.

x x x

70. You do not see the foundation of a multi-storied sky-scraper. Can you, therefore argue that it simply sits on the ground? The foundations of this life is laid deep in the past, in lives already lived by you.

This structure has been shaped by the ground plan of those lives. The unseen decides the bends, and

the ends, the number of floors, the height and weight.

God is the great unseen, the vast unknowable. Recognise that there is God as the very basis of creation; pray to Him, and He will shower fruit.

x x x

71. For the adventure of Sadhana, all are candidates, women as well as men. Sex is but a vesture worn by the Soul for the role of life on earth. It does not affect the life of the Spirit which is Eternal and on the Supra-sensory plane. Man and woman have each to purify the inner consciousness so that the Divine may reveal itself in all its Glory therein.

Married life and being a *Grihastha* will not bar your way to Realisation. Look upon the wife and children as a sacred trust, and serve them in that spirit. Prepare yourselves for a celibate and spiritual discipline from the age of fifty.

The age period 16-30 is a crucial stage, when man achieves best and struggles hardest to achieve. Once frittered, these years of life can never be regained. Take no devious path, but, move in the Footsteps of God and the Godly during this period of your life.

When you have God installed in your hearts, who can lead you to destruction? "My affection, My Love towards each one of you is that of a thousand Mothers." When you discover that You are God, there is no *Arpana,* no *Atmarpitham*. Wisdom wipes out all; God alone remains.

x x x

# 4. Meditation On Pranava—OM

The best *Upadesh* is the *Pranava,* the sacred syllable OM which summarises many principles of theology, philosophy and mysticism. Little children just learning to toddle about are given a three-wheeled contraption which they push forward, holding on the cross-bar. The OM is such a "vehicle" for the spiritual child. The three wheels are "a," "u" and "m," the three components of the *manthra.* OM is the primal sound inherent in the life-breath. Every time we breath, we say *Soham; "So"* when we inhale and *"ham"* when we exhale, meaning "He-I" instilling into ourselves the conviction that He who is all this external world is I who is all this internal world, the conviction of Unity. During deep sleep, when the senses, the brain and the mind are dormant and de-functionalised, the "He" and the "I" are not cognised as separate; the *So* (He) and the *ham* (I) both fade and the sound *Soham* is transformed into OM, indicating the merger of the

external with the internal into one Truth. OM has also many other significances, and the meditation on OM is a valuable sadhana for the seeker of reality. It is like the seven colours of the sun's ray merging into one colourless (white) brilliance.

x x x

2. Sadhakas would be benefited more if they repeat the *Panchakshari* or *Ashtakshari* with the *Pranava* added in the beginning. When they have proceeded some distance thus, they can give up even the words and concentrate on the Form depicted through the sound and transform the *Manthra* into the *Devatha* Himself. That is why the *Sruthi* says, *Nissabdo Brahma Uchyathe*.—"Brahma is Silence, absence of Sound."

x x x

3. Constant repetition of Om and intense meditation on its meaning are recommended for aspirants who seek cognition of the Indwelling Divine. *Shanthi* means Peace and Peace is invoked thrice, in order to allay the three sources of sorrow; operating through the individual organism, the deities and the Cosmic Intelligence.

x x x

4. *Pranava* is the bow; the Atma is the arrow; *Parabrahman* is the target. So the *Sadhaka* must, like the practitioner of the art of archery, be unaffected by things that agitate the mind. He should pay one-pointed attention to the target; then the bowman is filled with the target; he becomes the thing meditated on. In the *Kaivalyopanishad,* the *Mundakopanishad* and in various parts of the *Sruthi*, the *Pranava* is extolled in various ways. Therefore this *Manthra* which liberates man can be recited and meditated upon by all. All can practise the *Pranava Upasana;* you need have no doubts on this point.

x x x

5. "Whatever else a man may not meet during life, he is certain to meet with death. So each one must be trained to have at that time the attitude and thought that are most beneficial to him. Otherwise, life is a failure, a waste. A person unready for this consummation has to suffer the fate that will befall him. No one enters a battlefield in order to suffer defeat. So too, no one voluntarily accepts a fall; he seeks only progress. Will it not be wise, therefore, to strive for the end that is in your own best interest? Hence, every man must take earnest steps to secure the thought of the seventh item, *Pranava,* at the last

moment of life. Whoever dies in that thought attains Me," said Krishna.

Repeat the *Pranava* at the last moment; that is the reason why constant remembrance of the Lord is said to have the power of inducing the Lord to bear the burden of your *Yogakshema*, happiness here and hereafter. Of course, this too has to be practised long. Sadhana gains everything—sadhana, steady and strong.

x x x

6. In the human body there are six nerve centres, all in the form of the lotus-flower. All the six lotus-forms have letters or sounds attached to each petal. Like the reeds in the harmonium, when the petals are moved, each one emits a distinct sound. Those who follow this statement intelligently may get a doubt; if the petals are said to move, who or what is moving them? Yes, the Force that moves them is the *Anaahathadhwani* the Primeval Sound, the undistinguished, indistinguishable sound, emanating without effort, irrespective of Conscious Will. That is the *Pranava.* As beads in the string, all letters and the sounds they represent are strung on the *Pranava.* That is the meaning of the statement that He is the "*Pranava* of the *Vedas.*" Krishna's teaching is that

you should merge your mind in the *Pranava,* which is the Universal Basis.

The mind has an innate tendency to merge in whatever it contacts; it craves for this. So it is ever agitated and restless. But by constant practice and training, it can be directed towards the *Pranava* and taught to merge with it. It is also naturally drawn towards sound. This is the reason why it is compared to a serpent. The serpent has two crude qualities; one, its crooked gait and two, its tendency to bite whatever comes in its way. These two are also the characteristics of man. He too seeks to hold and possess all that he sets his eyes on. He too moves crookedly.

But there is in the serpent one praiseworthy trait; however poisonous and deadly its nature might be, when the strains of the charmer's music are played, it spreads its hood and merges itself in the sweetness of the sound, forgetting everything else. Similarly man too can, by practice, merge himself into the Bliss of *Pranava.* This *Sabdopasana* is a principal means of realising the *Paramatma,* who is "the *Pranava* of the Vedas." He is no other than *Sabda.* That is the reason why the Lord said that He is the "*Pourusha* of Man." *Pourusha* is the vitality, the *Prana* of Man. Without it, Man has no manliness.

However strong may be the force of the drag of previous births, it has to yield to the strength of adventure and achievement emanating from *Pourusha.* Unaware of this potentiality, foolish man is misled into cursing his fate; cursing the "inescapable" effects of what he dreads as "*Prarabdha*!"

Everyone has to exercise *Pourusha;* for without it life itself is impossible. Living is struggling, striving, achieving. God has created man so that he might wield the talent of *"Pourusha"* and achieve victory. His purpose is not to make man a consumer of food, a burden upon the earth, an animal that is a slave to its senses. He does not aim at creating a horde of idlers and loungers, who shy at hard work, and accumulating fat, grow into monstrous shapes. He does not create man with the idea that he should, while alive, ignore his Creator and deny Atma and wander about like animals, allowing both intelligence and discrimination to go to waste, moving about without an iota of gratitude to the Giver of all the gifts which he consumes and enjoys!

x x x

7. *Manthra* and *Japa* are essential for all types of men. What is a *manthra? Ma* means *manana* and *thra*

means saving; so *manthra* means that which can save you if you meditate on it. *Manthra* will save you from being caught up in the coils of this worldly life which is infested with death, grief and pain. Of all *manthras,* the *Pranava* is the highest and the best. It is the very head and crown of all of them.

x x x

8. March bravely on. Try to fill every moment with thoughts of God, in some form or the other. Repeat *soham*, with every breath: "*So*" when you take in and "*ham*" when you exhale. "*So*" means He and when you complete the inhalation and exhalation, feel that "*So*" namely, the Lord and "*ham*," namely, "I" i.e., (you) are One. Later, after long practice the idea of He and I as two separate entities will disappear and there will be no more *So* and *ham*. Those sounds will be reduced to "O" and "M," that is to say, it will be Om or the *Pranava.* Repeat that sound afterwards with every breath and that will save you from bondage to birth and death, for it is the *Pranavopasana* recommended in the Vedas. This *soham*-recitation is a good means of restraining the mind from running away with you. Let the mind be ever attached to the Lord; then, it will not flee, as it fancies, towards all directions. That is the meaning of the exhortation of Krishna:

*Sarvadharmaan parityajya maam ekam saranam vraja*; (Giving up all other activities, surrender fully to me.) Place the mind completely at His service. Then, He will save you from falling.

x x x

9. *Bha-ratha* is the land where everyone has *rathi* or attachment to *Bha* or Bhagawan; but today, people are in fact losing that taste and that attachment. You may tell Me, "We are so busy, we have no time to spare." Well, I cannot believe it is true. I know that you are finding time in spite of the hard work throughout the day, to attend cinemas, to engage in wayside chats, to promote and partake in factions, in quarrels and for many other distractions which add to the sum of your worries. It is best if you stay away from companions who drag you to such distractions that weaken and worry you; spend a few minutes every morning and evening in the silence of your own shrine or home, spend them with the highest of all the Powers that you know of. Be in His elevating and inspiring company; worship Him mentally; offer unto Him all the work you do; you will come out of the silence nobler and more heroic than when you went in.

Just consider—do you come out of the Cinema Theatre more peaceful, more heroic, purer, nobler

than when you went in? No; your passions are aroused, your animal impulse are catered to, your lower nature is fed. Nothing else can give you that rich reward, which silence and prayer and communion with the Master can give. Not even a decent bank account, nor a string of degrees, nor the muscle of a prize fighter.

x x x

10. There are many who argue that the *Pranava* can be repeated only by a few and that others are not entitled to it. This is wrong. This false conclusion has been arrived at since they do not know the truth. It springs from a mistaken belief.

The *Gita* does not mention this group or that group. Krishna declares "whoever" without any qualifying words limiting it to one class or sex. He has not even said, "who deserves or who does not deserve," "who is authorised or who is unauthorised." He has only said that for meditation on the *Pranava,* (mere "calling it to memory" is of no use) some preliminary disciplines have to be gone through, like the control of the senses, the concentration of the mind, etc.

For, when the mind is flitting from one fancy to another how can the production of a sound Om,

Om, by the vocal organs be of any benefit? The sound will not help the attainment of Liberation. The senses have to be curbed, thoughts have to be one-pointed, the Glory has to be apprehended. That is why the Lord advised that from birth to death one must be engaged in the search for Truth. Instead, if you postpone Sadhana until the last moment, you will be like the student who turns over the pages of his textbook for the first time, just before he enters the examination hall! If the student feels that he has before him one full year and if he neglects to learn from the teacher and from lecture-notes and from books, how can anything enter his brain when he opens the pages of his book that very morning? It will only add to his despair. He can be pronounced proficient only in indolence.

No tree will yield fruits the moment you plant the seedling in your backyard. To reach that stage, you have to follow carefully without break, the preparatory disciplines. No one can acquire the fruit without vigilance and steadfastness.

Sadhakas must always be aware of this. The yearning must be directed away from "how to be born" towards "how to die." For birth depends on how death takes place. Death comes first, birth happens later. Folks believe that men are born to die and they die so that they may be born. This is wrong.

You are born so that you may not be born again. That is to say, the man who dies must so die, that he is not born again. When once you die, you should not be born again to meet another death. Death is inevitable, if you are born; so, avoid birth and avoid death.

x x x

11. Every little moment or incident results in sound; only, you may not be able to hear, because the range of your ear is limited. The falling of an eyelid over the eye makes a sound, the dropping of dew on a petal makes a sound, Any little agitation disturbing the calm is bound to produce sound. The sound caused by the primal movement that resulted in the enveloping of Brahman by self-evolved *Maya* is the *Pranavasabda* or OM. The *Gayathri* is the elaboration of that *Pranava* and so, it is now held so venerable and valuable that initiation into *Adhyatmic* life is achieved by its contemplation.

The sound of a *Manthra* is as valuable as its meaning. Even a poisonous cobra is quietened by music; *Naadam*, sound, has that allaying property. The child in the cradle stops wailing as soon as the lullaby is sung; it may not carry any meaning; it may be a nonsensical rhyme or just a jingle, but, it quietens, soothes the nerves and induces sleep. In the case of the *Gayathri,* the meaning too is easy and profound. It does not ask for mercy or pardon; it

asks for a clear intellect, so that the Truth may be reflected therein, correctly, without any disfigurement.

The *Brahmachari* has vowed himself into a life of Sadhana. Now, what are the requisites for Sadhana? First, Faith—that can stand the ridicule of the ignorant, the cavilling by the worldly, the laughter of the low-minded. When someone ridicules, you should argue like this within yourself: is he ridiculing, my body? Well he is doing what I myself would wish to do; for, I too want to escape out of this attachment to this body. Is he ridiculing the Atma? Well, he is doing the impossible, for, the Atma is beyond the reach of words or thought; it is unaffected by praise or blame. Say to yourself, "My *Atmathathwa* is *Nischala*, it is *Nirmala*", and carry on. Second: Do not worry about ups and downs, loss or gain, or grief. You are yourself the market of the ups and downs. If you but care, it can all be one smooth level. You label something as loss and something as gain. You crave for a thing and when you get it, you call it joy; when you don't, you call it grief. Cut the craving off, and there will be no more swinging from joy to grief. Third: Reason out and get convinced of the truth, *Sarvam Brahmamayam*.

x x x

# 5. Dhyana and Jnana Yoga

1. In order to cultivate detachment, Vedantha indicates four different paths. They are known as the *Salokya, Samipya, Saroopya* and *Sayujya*. It has been taught in the ancient text that *Salokya* is something like the gross body. *Samipya* is like the subtle body, and *Saroopya* is like the causal body. It is only through cultivating detachment from the world, and gaining wisdom that you can reach a correct understanding of the various aspects of the body and finally attain the sacred state of *Sayujya* or the super causal state, wherein Atma will shine as a *Sakshi* or a witness. The *Brahma Thathwa* will shine with effulgence without any external container. In order to identify the *Jiva Thathwa,* the bodily aspect, with the *Brahma Thathwa,* which is free from the body, these four paths have to be followed. In order to realise the *Brahma Thathwa* or the formless reality, one has to choose a form as a stepping stone to reach the formless. As you look at a form with wisdom, the wisdom and the form will gradually merge into each other. Some support or direction is

needed to cross over from darkness to light, mortality to immortality. Some definite form of the gross type as a temporary object is a help to pass through the subtle body and causal body. It is then possible for us to reach the object of *Dhyana* (meditation).

x x x

2. *Dhyana yoga* and *Jnana yoga* both are inner disciplines; they are based on Sadhana and *Bhakthi* (devotion). Without these two they are both unattainable; the pursuit itself is vain. A *Sadhaka* deprived of them is like a wooden doll, lifeless, unaware of the goal. The basic requisite is deep-rooted Prema towards the Lord. How can you get this? By getting to know the glory, the splendour, the nature and characteristics of the Lord, His *Swabhava* (essential nature) and Swarupa (form, reality).

x x x

3. When we commence *Dhyana* and when we want to be in meditation, we should try and put ourselves in what is called a *Padmasana* (lotus position). Not only that, you should not sit on bare ground. You should sit on either a wooden plank or on a mat or something like that. Not only that, you should not sit on a bare wooden plank. You should spread a

piece of cloth over it. In the beginning, you should attempt to make a start with a wooden plank. The reasons are that the earth has got the power of conduction and diffusion. When you are sitting in meditation, since the current of divine strength on account of your Dhyana, is passing through you, you should not get disturbed by the attraction of the earth. Therefore you have got to have a plank.

x x x

4. Meditation is thus superior to your sensory organs and concentration is subservient to your sensory organs. There is a small example for this. There is a rose plant and in it you have the leaves, thorns, branches and the flowers themselves. In this context, the ability to distinguish between thorns, leaves, branches and flowers, can be termed as concentration. After looking at all these things, we can identify the flower. Once you are able to locate the flower and concentrate on it, then you can pluck it out without touching the thorns. Once you have plucked the flower, there is no relation whatsoever between the flower on the one hand, and thorns, leaves and branches, on the other. The separation of the flower from these other parts of the plant is called contemplation. You will take this flower and offer it

to God. After you have offered the flower to God, the tree, branches, your hand and even the flower do not exist at all. This offering, where others have disappeared and God alone exists, is called meditation.

x x x

5. By *Dhyana*, you get immersed in the idea of the Universality and the Omnipotence of God. Is it not your daily experience that a bigger worry overpowers the smaller one and makes you forget it? When you fill your mind with the idea of God and yearn for Him, and pine plaintively for Him, all lesser desires and disappointments and even achievements will pale into insignificance. You will forget them all; they will be submerged in the flood of Divine yearning and, very soon, in the ocean of Divine bliss.

x x x

6. Man's years of life are also spent in such futility. He completes the assignments of spending the allotted years, but how worthless is the achievement! Everyone composes the four lines; but do they make any sense? Do they deserve attention or appreciation? No. They pursue every will-o'-the wisp, every chance desire, every line of thought, and are satisfied that they have "lived." But, this complacence is

entirely misplaced. When the accounts are closed and debit and credit calculated, what is the profit earned? You have but wandered far and wide, but, neglected your home. You peep into the stars in space, but, keep your inner sky unexplored. You peep into other's lives and pick faults, and talk ill of them; but, you do not care to peep into our own thoughts, acts and emotions and judge whether they are good or bad. The faults you see in others are but projections of your own. The good that you see in others is but a reflection of your own goodness. By *Dhyana* (meditation) alone can you cultivate the good vision, the test for good listening, good thoughts and good deeds.

7. Do not divert all your energy to the cravings of the body, which ages every minute and is fast moving towards the burial ground. Life is a three-day fair. It is like a flower that fades by eventide. Old age, when physical charm is lost and when you have to depend on others for everything, will soon be upon all. Prepare then for death, have the equipment to meet it calmly, joyfully, with quiet resignation to the will of the Lord. You cannot get it in a trice, when you want it. It is the result of long years of practice. See the hand of God in everything that happens; then, you

will not exult or grieve. Then your life will be one continuous *puja* or *dhyana.*

x x x

8. *Yoga Sastra* declares that certain *Asanas* have to be utilised in order to remove the ever-widening circles of mental agitations and purify the mind; also to steady faith, to establish *Jnana* (wisdom) and arouse the *Kundalini Shakthi* latent in man.

x x x

9. There are many types of *Pranayama* but since in this present world most types are impossible to practise, only those that help *Dhyana* have to be adopted. They are *Laghupranayama* or simplified systems of breath control.

Like metals purified over fire in the crucible, the slag of karma is removed by *Pranayama* and the Mind is free from contamination. This and *Kaya Suddhi* are both brought about; the mind and the body are both rendered pure. There are two types of *Pranayama*—the one with *manthra* and the other without it. Without *manthra,* it can at best transform the body only, but with *Manthra,* it transforms the mind also.

How are we to practise it?

Two seconds long *Purakam* (inhale), four seconds long *Rechakam* (exhale), eight seconds long *Kumbhakam* (retention of breath)—in this series. Pranayama has to be practised carefully for three months, later the duration of *Purakam, Rechakam* and *Kumbhakam* can be doubled. When six months are spent in this steady practice, the activities of the senses are laid low. If practised with faith and feeling, *Pranayama* will tame the agitations of the mind; otherwise, it becomes mere physical exercise, improving just physical health. Pure food, *Brahmacharya,* living in solitude, moderate speech these conditions too have to be strictly observed.

x x x

10. *Jnana Yoga* is the most fruitful of all spiritual Sadhanas. All *Sastras* find their fulfilment in *Jnana* alone. *Dhyanam* is just the contemplation of the *Jnana Swarupa,* which is one's real nature. All are in you, you are in all. You have to get this conviction fixed in your consciousness, by means of analysis, discrimination and intellectual exploration. You have to isolate and dismiss from the consciousness the impressions of the senses, the mind, the intelligence, etc. These have nothing to do with the Atma, which

you really are. The Atma is unaffected by any subject or object. Even if the senses, mind, intelligence, etc., are inactive, that inactivity will not affect the Atma! To know the Atma as such, as an entity, unaffected and unattached, is the secret of *Jnana.*

Every single act of yours must be carried out with this *Jnana* as its background. That awareness of the Atma will guide you in both the out-moving and in-drawing paths, the *Pravritthi Marga* and the *Nivritthi Marga.* It will not block action but fill it with purpose and meaning. It will build up faith and moral life. It will take man to the realm of deliverance along the road of *Nishkama Karma,* the renunciation of the fruit of action, and not of action itself.

For the achievement of Liberation, *Jnana* is the direct road. Therefore it is declared to be incomparably sacred.

x x x

11. *Dhyana* stands for the sadhana or the practice by which the *sadhaka* meditates upon God, and thereby unifies the three constituents, namely, the object of meditation—the process—the meditator himself. The combination and oneness of these three is *dhyana.*

x x x

12. Get rid of the desire for sense enjoyment, which like the pleasure you get while scratching itching eczema, only makes the complaint worse. You cannot cure it by yielding to the temptation to scratch. The more you scratch, the more you are tempted to continue, until bleeding intervenes. So, desist from that vain pursuit and concentrate on spiritual matters or at least, move in the world with the ever-present consciousness that it is a morass, a net, a trap, into which attachment and desire will precipitate you.

x x x

13. Anger and hatred can be used to ward off the evil that stalks the *sadhaka;* be angry at things that hamper you; hate the habits that brutalise you. Cultivate *Jnana* and visualise the Lord in things and activities. That makes this human birth worthwhile. Do not seek faults in others; for the others are but manifestations of the Lord you are seeking to realise. It is your own fault that you see in others.

x x x

14. Like the tadpole's tail, the ego will fall away, when one grows in wisdom. It must fall away. If it is cut, the poor tadpole will die. So, don't worry about the ego, develop wisdom, discriminate, know the

ephemeral nature of all objective things—then, the tail will no longer be evident.

x x x

15. Man can acquire the sweetness of *Jnana* by keeping himself in *Sathsangh* or even by remaining in a solitary place, all by himself in *Dhyana,* for example. But by whatever means, the sweetness (the Jnana) cannot be injected from outside; it must grow from within. It is a transformation of the inner nature, won by a struggle with inner foes.

x x x

16. If you plead that you have no time to spare for *Japam* and *Dhyanam,* I will say that it is but laziness that makes you argue so. How can any lower task claim the time that is legitimately the right of the one task for which man is born? Rise everyday as if you are rising from death. Say, "Thus am I born. Make me speak soft sweet words, behave coolly and comfortingly towards all, do deeds that shower happiness on all, form ideals which are beneficial to all. May this day be worth-while for Thy Service." Pray like this, sitting on your bed, before you start the day's schedule. Remember that pledge throughout the day. Then when you retire at night, sit up and examine quickly all the experience of the

day; see whether you have caused pain or displeasure to anyone by any word or deed. Then, pray, "I am now dying and falling into your lap. Pardon me for any lapse. Take me under your loving shelter." After all sleep is a short death and death a long sleep.

Train yourself to waken when *Brahmamuhurtham* begins, that is to say, at 3:00 a.m. You may require an alarm clock at first for the job; but, soon, the urge for *Dhyana* (meditation) will rouse you. Do not take a bath before you sit for *Dhyana,* for the ritual of the bath will arouse the senses and you will be too full of pulls in different directions for the process of *Dhyana* to succeed. Regularity, sincerity, steadiness - these will reward you with success.

x x x

17. Shake off the superstition that *Dhyana* and *Japa* can wait, until the last years of life. This moment is the most appropriate time for everyone—no moment is too early.

x x x

18. There are two roads to fulfilment: Prayer and Meditation. Prayer makes you a supplicant at the Feet of God. *Dhyana* induces God to come down to you and inspires you to raise yourselves to Him. It tends to make you come together, not place one

in a lower level and the other on a higher. *Dhyana* is the royal road to liberation from bondage, though by prayer too, you earn the same fruit. Meditation needs concentration, after controlling the claims of the senses. You have to picture before your inner eye the Form which you have elected to contemplate. Or, elect to meditate on a flame, a steady straight flame of light. Picture it as spreading on all sides, becoming bigger and bigger, enveloping all and growing in you, until there is nothing else except light. In the glory of the all-enveloping light, all hate and envy, which are the evil progeny of darkness, will vanish. Know that the same *Jyothi* or light is in all. Even he, whom you were treating as your worst rival has the selfsame light in his innermost heart.

x x x

19. Regularity of time, is an important factor in *Dhyana* or yogic practice. Stick to the same time every day. If for any reason, say, a train journey, you are unable to keep to the schedule, remember at the same hour Prasanthi Nilayam, recall to memory the thrill of *Dhyana* there at that hour, and fill yourselves with the holiness. That will give as much joy as real *Dhyana* at Prasanthi Nilayam.

x x x

20. Set aside a few minutes, every day, in the beginning for *Dhyana*, later, you are sure to extend the period, when you experience the thrill of peace. Let it be the hours before dawn. This is preferable because the body is refreshed by sleep and the peregrinations of daytime have yet to impinge on the senses and distract physical, and mental energy. Have a lamp, with a bright little flame, steady and straight, or a candle, before you. The flame never diminishes in lustre, however many lamps may be lit therefrom. So, the flame is the most appropriate symbol of the eternal Absolute. Sit in the *padmasana* or any comfortable *asana,* in front of the flame. Look steadily at the flame, then closing your eyes, try to feel it inside you, between your eyebrows. From there, let it descend down into the lotus of your heart, illumining the path. When it enters the heart, in the centre of the chest, imagine that the petals of the lotus bud open out, one by one, bathing every thought and feeling and emotion and impulse in the Light and removing darkness.

    There is no space now for darkness to take refuge; it has to flee before the flame. Imagine that the Light becomes wider, bigger, brighter. It pervades the limbs; they can no more busy themselves in dark, wicked, suspicious activities. They have become,

instruments of Light, that is to say, of love; and you are conscious of it. The Light reaches the tongue. Falsehood, slander, bragging, spite, etc., vanish from it. It reaches the eyes and the ears. All dark desires that infest and infect them are destroyed by the brilliant Light of wisdom, virtue. No more puerility, no more poisoning of the ear. Let your head be charged with light; all wicked, vicious thoughts disappear, for, these are denizens of darkness. Imagine that Light in you, more and more intensely and it will be so. Let it shine all around you, enveloping you in the brilliance of Love; let it spread from you, in ever-widening circles, taking into its fold your kith and kin, the loved ones, friends, companions—nay, strangers, foes, rivals, enemies—all men all over the world, all living beings—all creation.

Do this every day, without break. For as long as you enjoy it, do it deeply and systematically. A time will certainly come, when you can no more relish dark and evil thoughts, no more yearn for dark and sinister plans, no more crave for toxic food and drinks, no more handle ugly demeaning things, no more suffer infliction of infamy or injury, no more formulate evil designs. You are then in the realm of the Divine, of Peace beyond words.

Stay on in that thrill, witnessing Light, being Light, everywhere, for all. If you are used to adoring God in any Form, visualise that form, in that Light. For, Light is God; God is light. When light meets light, it is all light. There is no boundary, between your light and His Light. They merge, they fulfil.

In this *Ashanthi,* (peacelessness), that is confounding the world, you must seek *Prasanthi* (the higher spiritual peace). In that *Prasanthi,* you can visualise *Pra-kanthi*, the all-embracing *Paramjyothi* (immanent and transcendent splendour, boundless, benign) is experienced. In that *Paramjyothi,* the Universal Eternal Absolute, the *Paramatma* is experienced. When the individual meets the universal, it becomes Universal. I and I become we; we and he become only we. Practise this meditation regularly every day. At other times, repeat the name of God (any name that arouses in you the spirit of adoration and devotion), always taking care to be intensely conscious of His Might, Mercy, and Munificence.

x x x

21. What Indra Devi has said is nothing new in this country, and for us. In fact, she learnt the elements of Yoga here and she is making many lives happy and

peaceful in the West through Yoga. Her campaign of Light in Darkness is only the *Sanathana Dharma* ideal of *Thamaso maa jyothirgamaya*, (from darkness lead me into light). It is really surprising that anyone should train people in concentration, for without concentration, no task can be accomplished by man. To drive a car, shape a pot on a wheel, weave a design, weed a plot of land—all these jobs require single-minded attention. To walk along life's highway, which is full of hollows and mounds, to talk to ones' fellowmen who are of manifold temperaments, all these require concentration. The senses have to be reined in so that they may not distract or disturb. The brain must not go wool gathering. The emotions must not colour or discolour the objectives one seeks. That is the way to succeed in concentration.

Yoga is *chiththa vriththi nirodha*, the cutting off of all agitations on the lake of one's inner consciousness. Nothing should cause a wave of emotion or passion on the calm surface or in the quiet depths of one's awareness. This state of equanimity is the hallmark of *Jnana* (wisdom). Sadhana is the drug and *Vichara* or inquiry is the regimen that will cure man of all waywardness and agitation.

The process of *Dhyana* on the Light of the Lamp has to be understood thus: First, feel that you are in the Light; then, proceed to the realisation that the Light is in you; later become aware that you are the Light, no more, no less. But, it is easier and better to project the light which you first visualise within you to the outside world, illumining more and more of the world, and visualising them all as soaked in the Divine Glory that is in you too. When you feel you are all light, you will have no weight: everything will be bright. That is why on the Prasanthi Flag, the *Atmajyothi* is represented as emanating from the *Hridayakamala,* when that Lotus blooms at the first touch of the rays of the Sun.

You can have other things besides Light to overcome the Darkness. Anything that awakens the awareness of the Universal, the Infinite, the Immanent, the Transcendent (Brahman, all-pervasive, vast, immanent) is beneficial. You can have some form of the Universal, like Krishna whose blue colour is redolent with the vast deep sky or sea. Contemplate on the form, picture it in your mind, spend time slowly and with full attention in that holy picturisation (your attention will wander far, in the initial stage, but, do not lose heart)—peacock feather, the *kasturi* dot, the brows, the eyes, the

nose, the nose-stud of pearl, the mouth, lips, teeth, the flute—O, you can spend hours painting Him on the canvas of your heart. It is a very profitable exercise to sublimate your thoughts and feelings. Every minute spent in this *Dhyana* will take you one step nearer Liberation, nearer *Mokshapuri*, the "Civitae dei" of Freedom from Bondage.

x x x

22. The mind must be allotted some heavy piece of work to hold it down. This work is called *Dhyana.* Keep the mind above the upper lip, between the two nostrils, right in front of the bridge of the nose. inhale through the left nostril, closing the right with the right thumb. As the breath goes in, it utters *So* (meaning, He); then exhale through the right nostril, closing the left nostril with right thumb. As the breath goes out, it utters *ham* (meaning, I). Inhale and exhale slowly and deliberately, conscious of the identity of He (the Lord) and I (yourself) which it asserts, until the breathing and the awareness grow into an unnoticed process. Keep the mind as a watchman, to note the incoming and outgoing breaths, to listen with the inner ear to the *So-ham* that the breath whispers, and to witness the assertion of your being the divine, which is the core of the Universe. This is the *Dhyana* that will give victory.

x x x

23. The Lord will not be moved by strict scholarly commentary. He is pleased only by actual practice; by genuine endeavour; by honest sincere effort; by the tireless striving to cleanse the mind. The striving must be alert and active, until the goal is reached. Someone asked Ramana Maharshi, "How long am I to engage myself in *dhyana?*" The Maharishi replied, "Until you lose all awareness of the experience of *dhyana.*" In the play *Dhruva* which the boys enacted, the boy who was Dhruva sat, straight and tense, giving us the impression that he was lost in *Dhyana;* but such histrionics cannot claim consideration. In real *Dhyana,* you soon get over the consciousness that "you are doing *dhyana.*" In fact, every moment in life must be a moment utilised for *dhyana.* That is the best way to live. When you sweep your rooms clean, tell yourselves that your hearts too have to be swept likewise; when you cut vegetables feel that lust and greed too have to be cut into pieces; when you press chapatis wider and wider, desire in addition that your love may take in wider and wider circles, and expand even into the regions of strangers and foes.

This is the means by which you can make your home a hermitage, and the routine of living into a route to liberation.

x x x

24. When you meditate on the Lamp and the Flame, you must visualise that the Light spreads and illumines the parents and kinsmen and later, friends and even enemies. There is no need to remind yourselves of physical relationships, which are casual; convince yourselves that the light within you is spreading all around you encompassing all, lighting millions of lamps in all lands and climes. Remove the hardness, the imperviousness that hides and smothers the light inside you; that is the most difficult and the most essential task, for a *Sadhaka*. The *Atmajyothi* will shine only when the *Dehabhranthi* is absent. How can the Atma shine when you identify yourselves with the material encasement?

x x x

25. Or, if you have Me as the object of meditation, sit in a comfortable pose, which is neither irksome nor flopping; let your mind dwell for some time on some good *Stotras* or incidents from the sacred stories, so that the senses escaping into the tangle of worldly worries may be quietened and subdued. Then, with the Name on the tongue, try to draw with the brush of your emotion and the hand of intellect, a picture of Swami, slowly, from the cluster of hair to the face and neck downwards, spending time in contemplating each as it is getting drawn and when the picture is

full, start from the feet up to the head again, so that your attention is never for a moment diverted from the Form you love to meditate upon.

By this means, it can never go astray. When a golden image is made of Ganesha, for example, the head is gold, the feet are gold, the silk cloth that is worn is also gold. Every part of the picture drawn is Divine. That picture must, by this process of deep concentration, be imprinted on the heart. So that like a picture printed on paper, it cannot be peeled off or erased. Do not change the pose in which you have started picturing; do not draw today Swami sitting and tomorrow, Swami standing or walking or talking. If it is Krishna, do not change from a Toddler Krishna with butter in His palm to a Cowherd Krishna with a flute, or with the Govardhanagiri raised over His head, or a Githacharya as the charioteer. Have one Form; that is of ample help.

x x x

26. Meditate on the truth and you will find that you are but a sparkling bubble upon the waters; born on water, living for a brief moment on water and dying upon its breast, merging in it. You owe your birth to God, you subsist on God and you merge in God. Every living thing has to reach that consummation;

why, every non-living thing too. So, do it now; take the first step, purify the heart, sharpen the intellect; or, at least begin the recital of the name of the Lord. That will give you all the rest in due time.

x x x

27. People think that the worship of God with Form and Attributes is quite enough. This discipline will only be of some help; it will guide the person along the road only for a little while. For the Lord will not condescend to grant Liberation for just this! For he who aims at liberation must first give up attachment to the body. Without that, the Atmic stage cannot be attained. The identification with the body is the expression of ignorance. The Atma must be recognised as distinct from the *Prakruthi.*

The craving for objective pleasure which is based on the unreal value attached to *Prakruthi* has to be removed by *Dhyanam* and *Thapas.* When the craving is lost, the individual becomes like the dry nut, inside the coconut shell, which becomes loose and unattached both to the shell and the fibre outside it; it does not germinate or sprout again; it will remain forever without being spoilt. The individual has no more birth and consequent death. That is to say, he will be liberated. Becoming like that dry nut inside

the shell is the stage called *Jivan-mukthi*, or Liberation while alive.

x x x

28. You have perfect freedom to select the Name and Form that give you the necessary encouragement. When you meditate, the mind often runs after something else, it takes another road. You have then to plug that outlet by means of the *Nama* and the *Rupa* and see that the even flow of your thoughts towards the Lord is not interrupted; if it happens again, use the *Nama* and the *Rupa* again, quickly. Do not allow the mind to go beyond the twin bunds, this side *Nama* and that side *Rupa!* Then it will not stray into a third place.

x x x

29. Do this concentration on your Reality every day, in *Dhyana.* Follow the same rigorous routine every day, time, place, duration, method, pose—all being unchanged. Then the disturbing factors can be easily humbled, and tamed. As Ramakrishna said, do not dig a few feet in a number of different places and moan that you could not strike water. Dig in one place steadily and with faith. The boring drill goes down into the very underground spring of water; drill "Ram" "Ram" "Ram"—continuously, steadily,

and you too can get the rewarding result of Realisation. "Ram" is the name of the drug; the disease will not be affected in the least, when you repeat the name of the drug; it is only when the drug is taken in, that the disease gets scared and packs to leave. It is as the jerks to the body; the *japam* tones up the mind and drives out the evil viruses from it. The heart is the pot, intelligence is the churning rod, sadhana is the process of churning and Realisation is the butter gained.

x x x

30. Even if another uses foul language against you, be calm and sweet; say, "O, I am so surprised that my behaviour has given you that impression." Smile in return, do not take it to heart; remind yourself that even Swami is not free from these peculiar beings who revel in falsehoods. Smile when you hear these revilings and be calm. That is a sign of your *Dhyana* progressing fast.

x x x

31. There is no short cut to any laudable achievement. Steady struggle alone can ensure victory. Things that are gained with little or no effort are not worth exulting over. The process of *yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dhyana* and

*aharana* (control of the inner and outer senses, regulation of pose and breath, withdrawal into one's inner consciousness, meditation concentration...) is hard; but, the final stage is *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*, the condition of perfect undisturbed equanimity. Whereas the pursuit of material pleasures will be *agre amritopamam, pariname visham* (like nectar at first but like poison at the end), the pursuit of equanimity will be *agre visham pariname amritopamam* (like poison at first but like nectar at the end).

x x x

32. Your progress must be authenticated by your character and behaviour. *Dhyana* must transmute your attitude towards beings and things; else it is a hoax. Even a boulder will, through the action of sun and rain, heat and cold, disintegrate into mud and become food for a tree. Even the hardest heart can be softened so that the Divine can sprout therein.

x x x

33. First, when you sit for meditation, recite a few slokas on the glory of God, so that the thoughts that are scattered could be collected. Then gradually, while doing *Japam,* draw before the mind's eye the Form which that Name represents. When your mind

wanders away from the recital of the Name, take it on to the picture of the Form. When it wanders away from the picture, lead on to the Name. Let it dwell either on that sweetness or on this. Treated thus, it can be easily tamed. The imaginary picture you have drawn will get transmuted into the *Bhaavachitram* or the Emotional picture, dear to the heart and fixed in the memory; gradually it becomes the *Sakshathkarachitra* when the Lord assumes that Form in order to fulfil your desire. This Sadhana is called *Japasahitha dhyana* and I advise you all to take it up, for it is best for beginners. Within a few days, you will fall in line and you will taste the joy of concentration. After about ten or fifteen minutes in the initial stages and longer after some time of this *Dhyana,* have some *Manana* on the Shanthi and the *Soukhya* you had during the *Dhyana;* that is to say, bring back into your memory the joy you experienced. This will help your faith and earnestness. Then, do not get up suddenly and start moving about, resuming your avocations. Loosen the limbs slowly, deliberately and gradually, and then enter upon your usual duties. Taste the fruits of *Dhyana* and learn to relish them; that is what I mean by this process of *Manana.*

x x x

34. Preserve your mental health by this supreme unconcern. Preserve your physical health, also. For, ill-health can be a great nuisance for the *Sadhaka,* a great handicap. The body will refuse to be ignored; it will thrust itself upon the attention if it is beset with disease. The body is the car, the senses are the mechanical parts and through the petrol—the Sadhana—you have to keep it going. When you have finished your *Dhyana,* do not get up, all of a sudden. Loosen the tension slowly, massage the joints a little, if necessary; after you have got rid of the tension, sit quiet at the same place and recall to your mind once again the thrill of *Dhyana* and repeat *Om Shanthih Shanthih Shanthih*, feeling the Peace within you.

x x x

35. There are three principles that have to be overcome, before *Jnana* can dawn: *dehathathwam* (the physical), the *indriyathathwam* (the sensory) and the *manasthathwam* (the mental). Even the mind has to be overcome before the One can be cognised; for, the mind seeks variety and change; it revels in the contact with the objective world called *vrittis*. The prevention of these *vrittis* in the mind, ever-widening circles in the *manasasarovar* (the lake of the mind) whenever a wish or thought or a

resolution is dropped into it, that is the function of the science called *yoga,* union. Union of what with which? union of *thath* with *thwam* of you and the rest, resulting in the One without a second.

x x x

36. When the man who meditates takes to the object of meditation and goes through the process of meditation, then all these three, the one who meditates, the one which is the object of meditation and the process of meditation—unify and coalesce into one and only then you achieve oneness.

x x x

37. Like the force of gravitation which drags everything down, the *Thamo shakthi* or the pull of sloth will drag you relentlessly down; so you must be ever on the watch, be ever active. Like the brass vessel which has to be scrubbed to a nice shine, the mind of man has also to be scrubbed by means of Sadhana; that is to say, activity like *Japam* or *Dhyana.*

x x x

38. Discipline is in fact the first step in self-realisation. The reason why I have called this the first step during your training is that today there are a large number

of people who cannot put up with difficulties and inconveniences and yet wish to achieve bigger and more subtle things. This discipline to which you will submit yourselves, will lead you to happiness and bliss.

x x x

39. You should never give up the habit of discipline. When you reach the state of perfection only, you do not have to think of regulations or discipline.

x x x

40. Deep sleep is often compared to *Samadhi*, for the senses, the mind, the reason, are all absent therein; only the ego is immersed in itself. It is in bliss, but, it is not aware of that bliss; for, waking alone gives that knowledge. So, what can grant Realisation is—the awareness of the waking stage in the bliss of the sleeping stage. Concentrate on the point, where one is having these two: that is the moment of victory.

x x x

41. Hold on to the Command; that is the genuine path of the *Bhaktha*. Never doubt or hesitate. Even if you are posted to the Canteen or the Hospital, do not get downhearted, that you cannot get *darshan,*

all the time. I have no such handicaps; you can have My *Darshan,* wherever you are. When you are engaged in *Dhyana,* if you hear some groan by your side, rise and investigate; do not curse and neglect. You get much more spiritual benefit, by this means, than by sticking on selfishly, to your patch of carpet or deerskin!

x x x

42. Concentration can be mastered in *Dhyana* and this will lead to disinterestedness in the results of one's actions, for the actions are not one's own, but God's. The results too are not one's; they are God's. When you become detached from the fruits of your actions, though intent on action (offering to the Lord your skill and energy), then, you attain peace of mind, *Prasanthi.* If, however, you cultivate attachment to things of the world, land and houses, bank balance and insignia of power, then, *Dhyana* fails.

x x x

43. We have all around us in the atmosphere the music emanating from all the broadcasting stations of the world; but they do not assail our ears at anytime. You are not aware of any station. But if you have a receiver, and if you tune it to the correct wavelength,

you can hear the matter broadcast from any particular station. If you fail to tune it correctly, you will get, instead of news, only nuisance! So too, the Divine is everywhere—above, around, below, beside—near as well as far. For cognising it, you require not a *yantra* (machine) but a *manthra* (mystical formula, potent with psychological undertone). Concentration or *Dhyana* is the fixing of the exact location of the station in the band; Love is the correct tuning in; realising the Reality and the Bliss it confers is the happy clear listening!

x x x

44. Since I have the responsibility to correct you and lead you into the right path, I advise you against "the evil of the eye"; do not relish ugly, vulgar, demeaning, degrading sights, sights such as the horrid film posters that are paraded at all city squares to draw you away into vice and crime. You must also avoid the "evil of the ear," relishing scandal, blasphemy, tidings of hate and greed, talk by the godless and the wicked, who have no love in their hearts and brotherliness in their deeds. Be guarded against the "evil of the tongue," "evil of the mind," and "evil of the hand"—that is to say, desist from words that injure another's reputation, harm his interests, and cause another pain. Desist from evil emotions and

passions. Keep away from bad deeds. It is only when these evils are absent that *Dhyana* on your ideal can succeed. Any trace of these will tarnish the mind and create turmoil and turbulence.

x x x

45. God who is also here, now, all around, can be cognised clearly by means of a *Manthra* (meditation on a meaningful mystic formula). Have the *Manthra,* concentrate on it (i.e., the adjustment to the wavelength), with Love (i.e., the tuning in) and you become aware of God (i.e., listening to the omnipresent programme). If the tuning in is not accurate, you run the risk of listening to the nuisance, not the news.

x x x

46. Remove all traces of salinity from your hearts, adding to the soil the precious complement of the Name of the Lord. Water it with faith. Then plant the seedlings of Divinity, have discipline as the fence, and steadfastness as the pesticide to be sprayed. Then, you can reap the rich harvest of *Jnana* which will free you from the task of cultivation forever. Those who laugh at people doing *Bhajan* or visiting Temples or attending Divine Discourses have not tasted the nectar, and are therefore, prejudiced against it. Pity them, for they do not know what they miss.

x x x

47. For *Dhyana* the time is important. This time which is important is referred to as *Brahma Muhurtham.* You will have to chose whatever Form you like for the purpose of meditation and during the time interval called the *Brahma Muhurtham* which is from 3:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. you will have to meditate on that at the same time, every day.

x x x

48. Now, even in matters relating to the realisation of God, one has to be careful. Whatever inconvenience one may encounter, one must try to carry on one's Sadhana, without any break or modification in the disciplines. One should not be changing the Name that one has loved and cherished and selected for *Smarana.* Concentration is impossible if the Name is changed once every few days. The mind will not attain one-pointedness. All sadhana has this one-pointedness as its ultimate aim; so, avoiding constant adoption and rejection of Names and Forms of the Lord, one single Name must be used throughout for *Japam* and *Dhyanam.* One has also to get the strong conviction that all the Lord's Forms are but the Name and Form which one is repeating in *Japam* and meditating on during *Dhyanam.* That Name and that Form must not give any of the slightest feeling of dislike or disaffection. Taking all worldly losses,

sufferings and worries as merely temporal and transitory, and realising that all this *Japam* and *Dhyanam* is only to overcome such grief, the *Sadhaka* should keep the two things separate, without mixing up that with this, and, this with that. He must understand that the loss, suffering and worry are external, belonging to this world, and that *Japam* and *Dhyanam* are internal, belonging to the realm of the love for the Lord. This is what is called *Pathivratha Bhakthi,* or chaste devotion. The other variety, where the *Sadhaka* selects one Name and one Form and after some time discards them for another Name and Form, is called *Vyabhichara Bhakthi,* or unchaste *Bhakthi.*

It is not a fault if it is done in ignorance; but having once known that it is wrong and harmful, and after continuing *Dhyanam* and *Japam* with that *Nama* and *Rupa* faithfully, if they are subsequently changed, it certainly is wrong. Sticking faithfully to the *Nama* and *Rupa* is the highest vow, and the highest austerity. Even if elders advise you, do not give up the path approved by your mind. Of course, which elder will suggest to you that you should change the Name of the Lord and give up the Form that you adore. Do not consider those who tell you to do so, as elders; consider them as dullards. Again see that,

as far as possible, the time and place of *Dhyanam* and *Japam* are not changed and shifted. Sometimes, as while travelling, even if it becomes necessary to change the venue, the time at least should be kept unaltered. Even if one is in a railway train, or a bus, or some such inconvenient surrounding at the specified time, one must, at least, recall to one's mind the *Dhyanam* and the *Japam* done by oneself, at the same time in the past.

In this way, accumulating Spiritual wealth, one can surely become the Master, and attain the Atma.

x x x

49. *Thithiksha* means equanimity in the face of opposites, putting up boldly with duality. It is the privilege of the strong, the treasure of the brave. The weak will be as agitated as peacock feathers; they are ever restless, with no fixity even for a moment. They sway like the pendulum, this side and that; once towards joy, the next moment towards grief.

*Thithiksha* is not the same as *Sahana. Sahana* is putting up with something, tolerating it, bearing it, because you have no other go; having the capacity to overcome it, but yet, disregarding it—that is the spiritual discipline. Patiently putting up with the external world of duality combined with inner

equanimity and peace—that is the path to Liberation. Bearing all, with analytic discrimination—that is the type of *Sahana* that will yield good result.

x x x

50. The *Indriyas* or senses have to be rigorously controlled by *Viveka* and *Vairagya,* the twin talents given exclusively to man. *Viveka* instructs you how to choose your avocations and your associates. It tells you the relative importance of object and ideals. *Vairagya* saves you from too much of attachment and injects a sense of relief, at times of elation or despair. They are the two wings that lift the bird into the air. They hold before you the impermanence of the world and the permanence of the Bliss of Reality. They prompt you to direct your lives towards spiritual Sadhana and the never-failing contemplation of the glory of the Lord.

x x x

51. It is not necessary to retire to the forest to get rid of anger and hatred. Virtue cannot be practised in a vacuum. If you live in an atmosphere of anger and are able to control it, then it is a meritorious achievement. But if you live in a forest where there is no room for anger and say that you have controlled your anger, it is not meaningful. You must

therefore remain in the worldly surroundings where there is ample scope for the rising up of emotions, of anger and hatred and then learn to control them. That will be a meritorious achievement.

x x x

52. The word *Samadhi* has been variously interpreted by our scholars. When someone falls unconscious during *sankirtan* or when someone becomes stiff during yoga, they think it is a state of *Samadhi.* But this is not real *Samadhi.* The very meaning of the word is conveyed by the two syllables that make the word *Sama* and *Dhi—Sama* means equal, *Dhi* means buddhi. So to be untouched by joy and sorrow, to take them in the same stride is *Samadhi.*

x x x

53. Are we not at peace, when one thought ceases and another does not rise? You have to watch that moment, be one with that moment and get fixed in that, there is ceaseless continuous peace; thoughts arise and die as ripples on water; you have to look at the water, rather than the ripples. Neglect the waves, watching the water.

x x x

54. Man's *Dharma* is to cultivate his faculties for the great adventure of realising his oneness with the basic substance of the Universe, a substance that is attributeless, but, yet is mistaken to have attributes like names and forms and functions. This is declared in the *Mahavakyas,* enshrined in the Vedas and elaborated in the Upanishads. To get the mind and the intelligence fixed in that oneness, man must meditate on them in silence and solitude, under the guidance of a Guru. If the teacher himself gives the answers for the questions he asks, how can the pupil progress? If the pupil is left to himself, he would be helpless. If he is asked to scribble whatever he can, he can only doodle. So, the teacher has to hold his hand and teach him the movements.

The skill of the hand and brain have thus to be reinforced by the guiding hand of the Guru. The pupil has to cultivate concentration. When attention flows in all directions, no progress can be made. A good teacher must love the pupil and lead him, step by step.

Practising meditation in silence and solitude, one can, in due course, establish silence and solitude in the heart, even in the busiest thoroughfares Now, the *puja* room or domestic shrines are invariably found next to the kitchen. There, the smell of

cooking attacks the nostrils; the sounds of frying and boiling attack the ear. The mind is distracted by voices and noises. How can concentration grow in such an atmosphere? Silence has to be started with oneself; that is to say, one must talk less, and think more deliberately, more discriminatingly. One must try to empty the mind of impulses and prejudices and preferments. Thus, man must strive to reach down to his real nature, which is Divine, *Dharmaswarupa.*

x x x

55. Practise *Dhyanayoga.* Resolve to master the senses through this *Yoga* and follow it steadily, systematically, regularly, at a stated time and in a stated place, without changing them as the whim takes you. A regular system is essential for his Yoga. Observe it strictly. Do not alter as fancy dictates, that will bring about dire consequences. For those who eat too much and get exhausted with the task of assimilating it, for those who eat less and suffer from exhaustion, for those who sleep too much or too little, for those who indulge in *Dhyana* according to "convenience" (that is to say, those who do it for long hours one day because they have no other work, and do just token *Dhyana* the next day, because they have lots of work), for those who give free rein to the six inner enemies (*Kama, Krodha* and the rest), for those

who do not confer joy on parents, especially the mother—more than all these, for those who entertain doubt and have little faith in the Lord, or in the Guru, whom they have chosen and installed in their hearts—*Dhyana* will yield no fruit at all.

x x x

56. When persons come to Me and complain that they cannot concentrate, I laugh at their weakness, for even the driver of a car is a master of the art of concentration. He does not pay heed to the chatter from the seat behind him or to the chatter of the person on his left. He is watching the road in front of him with single-pointed attention. If you have *Sraddha,* more than half the battle is won. That is why in the *Gita*, Krishna asks Arjuna, "Have you listened to what I have said with one-pointed attention?" And Arjuna, good student that he is, says in reply that even in the midst of the opposing armies ranged on the battlefield, he has listened to the words of the Lord with keen concentration. Learn that concentration and your learning will stand you in good stead.

x x x

57. The fundamental factor in spiritual life is suppression of desire: the surrender of the individual will to the

Divine Will. Elevate all thoughts, words and deeds into acts of worship. When Ravana fell dead, his queen Mandodari lamented over his body, "You conquered every enemy of yours, except your own lust! You were pious, you were learned, you subdued even the most powerful foes—but, you allowed yourself to be enslaved by desire. That brought about your downfall." The magnifying glass draws the rays of the sun on a single point and can set fire to paper or grass. So too, concentration of attention can destroy the seeds of wanton desire. That is why I advise a few minutes of *dhyana* every day, both in the early morning hours and in the evening, after dusk.

x x x

58. Then there is the problem of *dhyana.* Apart from the *dhyana* that you do individually, it is good for you to sit for ten or fifteen minutes, at the place where you did *bhajan,* and after *Omkar* collect your thoughts and meditate on the God whom you adored so long. Or you can meditate on the flame of the lamp in front of you and cause it to illuminate your inner consciousness and overflow into the entire creation. *Dhyana* sanctifies all activities and controls the mind. You can picture the God whom you adored in *bhajan,* in the splendour of that overflowing light. This group *dhyana* after *bhajan*

will prepare the ground for individual *dhyana* in your own home; the taste will grow, the duration will become longer, the peace that fills you will become deeper. I insist on *dhyana,* as an indispensable item of sadhana for every member of this organisation.

x x x

59. All the joy you can crave for, is in you; but, like a man who has vast riches in the iron chest, but, who has no idea where the key is, you suffer. With proper directions, dwelling upon them in the silence of meditation, it is possible to secure the key, open the chest and be rich in joy.

x x x

60. Arjuna complained to Krishna against the wildness of the mind. He said, it was *chanchala*, (always changing its objectives) *pramadhi*, (full of dangerous possibilities since it makes man a slave of the senses) *balavath,* (uncontrollable) and *drdham* (difficult to destroy). But, the mind can be controlled and even eliminated by means of intense *dhyana* on the immanent God. When that stage is reached, anger, anxiety and envy will cease bothering you; the bounds of "I" and "mine" will break; and you have *Shanthi* (undisturbed peace). Your efforts must be in proportion to the grandeur of the gain you

envisage, isn't it? You crave for bliss but, cling to smaller pleasures and refuse to stake as much as is needed to win it.

x x x

61. The body is the *kshethra*, of the Master who knows all *kshetras*. One day, when Vivekananda was in his room, at night, sleepless because he was tossed about by conflicting thoughts, Ramakrishna who was "asleep," was talking as if in a dream but his talk was clearly heard by Vivekananda. He said, "*O Manas! O Manasarajahamsa! O Nithya-ananda rasaikanilaya!* You are *Daiva Swarupa*. Sport in the pure lake of *Dhyana* of the Divine; instead, why do you crave for the dirty pond of sensual pleasure!" That was the advice of the Guru to Naren. Naren immediately resolved to take that advice to heart.

x x x

62. What you receive and at what time, it all depends on His Grace. The *Sadhaka's* mission is to practise *Dhyana,* without deviating from the straight path. The rest is all His Grace. It does not depend upon the number of days or the length of time. Some may require many births; others may realise the goal in a few days even. It depends on each one's *Sraddha*, *Bhakthi* and Sadhana. It cannot be calculated and reasoned out.

x x x

63. Two things are essential for happy life: *dhanya* and *dhyana. Dhanya* or grains for the sustenance of the body and *dhyana* or contemplation for entering the temple of the Lord and merging in His glory.

x x x

64. Worry about the discipline needed for the Sadhana, but not about its fruition. The reality, the realisation of the reality these have no steps or limits. Do not yield to all sorts of delusions, or desires for this stage and that. Stick to the goal and the journey. Never give up the discipline of the Sadhana. Do not change the time of *Dhyana.* With one aim and unchanging attitude, strive to attain it. That will vouchsafe all the fruit. That will bless you with all the Bliss. Do not be led away by what others speak about their imaginary experiences. For you, nothing can be as genuine as your own experience. Therefore, first attempt to gain undeviating concentration, *Ekagratha*; let that be your one aim.

x x x

65. The person who takes up the process of meditation lands into a state of *Nirvikalpa* (a state of perfect undisturbed equanimity) sometime or the other, though it is a very difficult state to attain. Even a *Karmayogi* or a *Bhaktha* touches this stage time

and again in the most natural way and knows fully what it is. Therefore, he can remember it and bring it back into experience, and feel the joy of continuous communion with God.

x x x

66. To be established in *Dhyana,* the aspirant should cultivate the control of the senses and the passions, that is to say, *Sama* and *Dama* and also, the attitude of acting without any desire for the fruits of action. Whoever is an adept in the six qualifications, *Sama, Dama,* etc., can easily see with the mind's eye the *Swarupa* of *Brahman* as soon as he hears the exposition of its nature. *Phalabhogaviraga* or renunciation of the desire for the enjoyment of the fruits of one's action is also essential; when this *vairagaya* is rooted deep, the *Chitta* becomes pure and *uparathi* or withdrawal of the senses from the objective world is made possible.

Yoga too is of two varieties: *Rajayoga* and *Jnanayoga.* In *Rajayoga,* there are eight stages which have to be well cultivated, and realised. Of these, some are external, some internal. This is the Aryan path. In the *Jnanayoga,* there is no external at all. Both these *yogas,* have as their goal, the stilling of the agitations of all levels of consciousness. For

those who have calmed all these agitations, everything is *Brahman.* Primary for this purpose is *Jnanayoga* more than *Rajayoga;* at least that is the opinion of the Knowers of *Brahman;* they say, "that is the thing to be known, to be reached."

But according to the wisdom of the Upanishads the direct knowledge of the *Brahman* can be got by the Eightfold *Yoga* of *Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Prathyahara, Dharana, Dhyana,* and *Samadhi.*

YAMA: It includes *Ahimsa* (Non-violence), *Sathya* (Truth), *Astheya* (Non-stealing), *Brahmacharya* (Celibacy) and *Aparigraha* (Non-acceptance). This is the usual meaning given to *yama,* but I would say instead that it means the giving up of attachment to the body and to the senses. The *Brahma* entity appears, as a result of Delusion, as all this Creation. This Appearance has an End; it has various other limitations. It appears to be ever moving and so it is called *Samsara.* Thus this *Brahma* entity appears in both the individual form of *Vyashti* and the collective form of *Samashti* and deludes even the great scholars and pandits.

One single *Chaithanya* becomes manifest in different ways as all this multiplicity. Therefore, we speak of

the particular and of the Collective i.e., a collection of Particulars. Of course, the Particular *(Vyashti)* is a super imposition on the *Brahman,* like seeing the snake on the rope, the lake in the mirage; each of the three bodies, the *Sthula*, the *Sukshma* and the *Karana* is itself for the knower of the *Brahman,* a super imposition. To say that it is real or unreal is not correct; it is neither real nor unreal, it is *Mithya*. The ignorant man caught in the meshes of this Delusion believes that *Samsara* is everlasting and a source of happiness.

Falsely identifying themselves with the body, men suffer in the coils of attachment towards their mother, father, wife, children, relatives and friends. They do not realise (through the constant contemplation of the *Brahman* having the characteristics of *Sath-Chith-Ananda,* through the never-ceasing discrimination between the changeless and the changing, through associations with the good, the service of the wise, the acquisition of purity of intelligence) that they have neither body nor senses, that they are *Brahman* (the sustenance and support—the *Adhishtana* of the threefold Body and everything else). The establishment of one's intellect in this consciousness is the real renunciation or *Vairagya* of the body and the senses, implied in the word, *Yama.* This is what is called *Yama,* in *Jnanayoga.*

Joy in times of good fortune and sorrow in times of loss, mistaking the pain of the body and the senses as one's own, such dual attitude and feeling must be overcome. Step by step, the identification with the body and senses has to be given up. This is the sign of one's acquiring the *Anga* of *Yama.* The *Anga* is the very foundation of *Jnanayoga.*

NIYAMA: It means purity, being always full of joy engaged in *Thapas* or *Japam.* That is what is mentioned in *Rajayoga: Soucha, Santosha, Thapas, Swadhyaya, Easwarapranidhana,* these are the components of *Niyama.*

*Niyama* is the condition of steady *Prema* in the *Paramatma* or Godhead, at all times and under all conditions. "*Saa parama prema roopaa,*" it is said in the *Narada Bhakthi Suthra.* It is the highest form of *Prema.* It is only when such steadfast Love towards the Absolute is gained, that the *Soucha* or purity, the *Santosha* or joy, the *Thapas,* the *Swadhyaya* or Study, the *Easwarapranidhana* or Surrender to the Lord, mentioned in the *Rajayoga* will also be got. When *Yama* is won, *Ananda* and *Shanthi* will become the possession of Man through the source of all *Ananda* and *Shanthi,* the *Sath-Chith-Ananda Parabrahma* Entity.

For these two are not derived from the dry worldly material objects. *Rasovai sah* (He is Sweetness), *Ananda vai Brahma* (*Brahma* is *Ananda*), say the Upanishads. It is in and through *Brahma* that the material world is endowed with even the tiniest modicum of joy. Without the basic *Brahma,* which is the completest and the fullest sweetness and joy, this fleeting, evanescent Appearance thereon cannot be so sweet and joy-giving to the worldly minded. It would have been, without that basic *Rasa,* terribly bitter. For this little sweetness that material objects give, the Ocean of Nectar is the cause. The association with the knowers of *Brahma,* the discussion with them of the Nature of the Absolute in a spirit of humility and earnestness, a thirst to realise the Reality, unwavering *Prema* towards the Lord, these are the characteristics of those established in *Niyama.* Such stalwarts will not be affected by derision or praise, by wind or rain, by honour or dishonour. They will tread the path of liberation from all attachment to anything except the one single aim of realising the *Ananda* of Union with the basic *Brahma.*

He who has realised the stage of *Niyama* will be ready to sacrifice everything for the acquisition of *Jnana.* He will run to any distance to listen to

discussion of *Brahmam.* He will obey every instruction of the wise. He will attach himself to those who teach him the science of Ultra-consciousness or *Chinmayathathwa,* as if they alone are his most intimate friends. He will put up with any trouble in fulfilling their wishes. These are the signs of *Niyamastha.* or a person who has achieved *Niyama.*

ASANA: One should have a steady pose in sitting, that is to say, one should not either shake or sway. But, even if one sits like a rock, motionless and with all joints locked, it can never be called *asana.* That is not the sign of real *asana. Asana* means both steadiness of the physical frame and inner joy that blooms in the heart. So whatever the pose adopted by the *sadhaka* of Yoga, it must be both steady and comfortable. That is why Patanjali has advised, *Sthirosukham-aasanam.* I am telling you the same thing, in another way: which is the best and most success-yielding *asana?* It is that pose in which one is most unaffected by the external world. It is that pose which comes of the practice of the moral life, meritorious in the world and in accordance with the Vedic path. It is absolute lack of interest in matters unconnected with *Paramatma.* When someone whose ways you do not appreciate comes near you,

there is no need to find fault with him; there is no need either to laugh at him or show him your contempt. It is enough if you continue to do your work, unaffected by his arrival.

Let those whose behaviour you do not appreciate follow their path, leave them alone. That is the *Udaseenabhava*, the attitude of unaffectedness. After the dawn of love to the Absolute, the aspirant gets this *bhava* towards all worldly things. To be more exact, one should constantly be turning over in the mind, the Reality of *Brahma* and the Unreality of the *Jagath; Brahma Sathyam: Jaganmithya.* One must avoid comradeship with the bad and too much of friendship with the good even! Attachment of this nature will drag one to the *Pravritthi Marga.* Give up attachment with the momentary, the things clothed with the trappings of Name and Form. Once you have achieved this *Udaseenatha*, or attitude of unaffectedness, you will have unshakeable *Shanthi,* self-control and purity of mind. You will have the steadiness and stability of *Asana.*

PRANAYAMA: means usually the control and regulation of the inhaling and exhaling of the breath. In the *Yoga Suthras*, this is explained as *Rechaka, Puraka, Kumbhaka,* etc., comprising the various stages of *pranayama.* But I explain it like this: The

control of the *pranas* or *pranasamyama* is possible only for those who consider this whole universe as unreal. We are seeing golden ornaments of various types and styles, all are made of the same metal gold; but, still, one likes one ornament more, another ornament less, not all the things equally. We have given various names and forms ourselves to these articles according to the needs and fashions, likes and desires; but, yet, we are bound by a meaningless delusion which blinds us to the actuality. When the ornaments were being manufactured, when they are in use and when they are finally melted into a lump, they are and they remain "gold."

Likewise, so many names and forms appear and reappear in this world, rise, grow and get destroyed, but that which is the basic substratum, the eternal, persists in and through all this change and remains eternal. Just as the multiple forms create the illusion and arouse feelings of hatred and love, so too, these forms and names delude and create attachment. They make us believe that they are themselves the source of joy. But, do not *Sruthis* say, the Universe is nothing but *Brahman,* the Beginningless, the Endless, the Unblemished, the Ever-pure? They declare that the ornaments are passing phases, that Gold alone is eternal and real and true. Therefore,

you must take everything to be *Brahman* and *Brahman* alone. Convince yourselves that all appearances are the product of *Maya*, practise always that type of discrimination, evince great interest in knowing the reality and be ever alert to recognise the truth that everything is *Brahman.*

Of course, in the deluded stage, the world appears real and *Brahman* as a meaningless concoction. In the stage of intelligent clarity, the *Jagath* is grasped in its true sense as unreal. The Fairy of Delusion overpowers you by her charms and by her arrows of falsehood and guilt. It is only the person possessed of the vision of the universal *Brahman* that can soon escape her wiles. Such a person fully knows that names and forms arose a little time ago and disappear a little time after. In the *Gita* too it is said, "these, O Bharatha, appear in the middle only." ( 11 : 28) The world is subject to evolution and involution. To understand this, one need not wait till the end of the world. It is enough if the angle of vision is corrected. That is the gateway to real knowledge. That is real control of *Pranas,* the consciousness that the world is Unreal, or *Mithya.*

The genuine master of *Pranayama* will picture the world like letters written in pencil many years ago,

indistinct, hazy, misty. Knowing the *Brahman* alone is all this, he will never be drawn towards his environment however fascinating it may be. Earnings, wealth, property, everything is unreal, valueless, not worthwhile. This conviction is the best sign of *Pranayama.*

PRATHYAHARAM: The tongue tastes, the eye sees, the ear hears, the skin feels and the nose smells, each sense acts thus throughout life, is it not? The senses have to be withdrawn from the external objective world and turned towards the internal Mental Consciousness or intelligence known as *Chittha.* This process is called by Patanjali in his *Yoga Suthras* as *Prathyaharam.* However, I shall define it in another manner also.

The inward activity of the *Chittha,* that is to say, the perpetual in-sight of the *Chittha,* the fundamental directive force of all the senses, that is the real meaning of *prathyaharam.* It is only when the *Chittha* or the Mind stuff realises that this is all *Maya*-born and *Maya*-maintained that it will draw back its feelers from the sensory world, and give up its worldly selfish attitude. The general nature of the *Chittha* is to waver and hesitate and flutter in its search for happiness and peace. When it knows that the things it ran after are transitory and meaningless,

it grows suddenly ashamed and disillusioned. Then, it begins to illumine the consciousness and to clarify it.

The *Sadhaka* who has attained this stage will be watching the outer world as a huge pantomime; his inward look will give him such joy and contentment that he will repent for all the time wasted in external activities and pursuit of sensory joy. So, the straight, sharp, single-pointed vision of the *Chittha* towards the Atma within, that, is the real *Prathyaharam.*

DHARANA: Pathanjali has explained that when the *chittha* is fixed in one place, it is named *Dharana.* I would say that it means more the undeviating attitude of the *Chittha,* its unwavering character. When the *Chittha* gives up the attachment to external objects, when it is saturated with repentance for past foolishness, when it is filled with remorse, renunciation and understanding, when it directly fosters the development of head and heart, then truly it becomes fit to join the ideal. It contemplates only the ideal. Such fixed attention is what is meant by *Dharana.*

To whichever place the *Chittha* may wander, instruct it to find only *Brahman* there. Whatever ideas and

pictures it may form, instruct it to find only *Brahman,* in those creations of the mind stuff.

Treat your *Chittha* as a little boy. Bring up that boy, training it to become wiser and wiser, caress it into good ways, make it aware that all objects that are "seen" are just products of one's own illusion, remove all its fears and foibles and focus its attention steadily on the goal only. Never deal forcibly with the *Chittha;* it will yield easily to tenderness and patient training. Correct its waywardness by means of the attitude of renunciation. Destroy its *ajnana* by means of the instruction in the knowledge of the Atma. Strengthen the interest, it is already endowed with, towards the realisation of *Brahman,* let it give up the attraction towards the evanescent and the false, the mirages created by fancy and fantasy, turn its face inwards away from the external world. By these methods, *Dharana* can be established firmly.

During both the waking and the dream stages, as well as during all the process of mental spinning and weaving of colourful pictures by the imagination, the *Chittha* has to be watched and trained. It must be made to flow, single-pointed and steady, like water from a sluice, towards *Brahman* and *Brahman* only. That is real *Dharana*.

DHYANA: *Jnana* that flows in a single direction is *Dhyana.* I have already described its various characteristics in previous articles. *Dhyanam,* in short, is the uninterrupted dwelling of the consciousness in *Jnana,* the consciousness itself becoming thereby *Jnana Swarupa.* All this is *Brahman.* The ocean of *Amritha* is everywhere *Amritha.* Whether in the well or in the river, or ocean, water is water. So too, when all is *Brahman,* all is the same substance appearing under a multiplicity of names and forms. *Akasa* is there, inside the pot as well as outside it, and it is the same *Akasa,* though it appears as two, interior *Akasa* and the exterior *Akasa!* The *Brahman* too appearing as various bodies with their own individual characteristics, is One and one Only. Like *Akasa* inside the pot as well as outside the pot, it is One. Experiencing that One and only *Brahman,* avoiding all feelings of difference and distinction, that is the sign of *Dhyana,* the essence of the *Dhyana* experience, however much individuals may vary.

When Form is ignored and meaning alone is felt, that is *Samadhi.* This is the opinion of Patanjali. This can be explained in another manner also. When the person engaged in *Dhyana*, forgets both himself and the fact that he is engaged in *Dhyana,* then it becomes *Samadhi.* That is to say when he is merged

in the thing he meditates on, he enters into the stage called *Samadhi. Dhyana* fulfils itself, becomes complete, in *Samadhi. Dhyana* strives, proceeds through effort, but, *Samadhi* comes effortlessly. It is the culmination of the eightfold discipline, the *Ashtanga.*

When one knows that there is absolutely no iota of distraction between the *Jiva* and the *Atma,* that they are One and the Same, then it is the highest *Samadhi.* It is the fruit of ripest *Dhyana,* the dearest moment of *Yogis,* the destroyer of *ajnana*, the Signal of the Grace of God. Incessant thirst to know the *Atman* as all, is worthy to be encouraged and welcomed, for it is the path through which all doubts can be eliminated.

67. In order to develop and grow in concentration during meditation, you must reduce your wants and disregard your wishes. See everything as a disinterested witness; do not plunge and get entangled. When the shackles are loosened you will feel happy and light.

Meditation is the function of the inner man; it involves subjective quiet, the emptying of the mind and filling oneself with the Light that emerges from the Divine Spark within. This is a discipline which no

text book can teach; and no class can communicate *Dhyana.* Purify your emotions; clarify your impulses; cultivate love. That mastery is the purpose of the process of meditation or *Dhyana.*

The mother can sit near her child and utter words to encourage the child to speak, but, the child has to use its own tongue and put its own efforts. So too, a person can teach you how to sit and keep the torso erect, the legs folded, the hands straight, the fingers crossed, the breathing: steady and slow—but, who can teach you how to control the wayward mind?

When this *Soham Dhyana* has stabilised itself, you may start stabilising in your mind the Form or *Rupa* of your *Ishtadevata,* the Lord of your choice. Picture the Form from head to foot, taking about 15 to 20 minutes first. This will help to fix the form in the altar of your heart.

Then, you will see everywhere that Form only; in all beings, you will find Him only. You will realise the One manifolded as Many; *Shivoham, Soham,* I am Shiva, I am He, Only He *is.*

One can carry on worship or *Dhyana* according to his conviction in the privacy of one's own house.

x x x

68. The AUM of the OM, represents the "Om Thath Sath" principle—the "That is the Truth," "I am the Truth," "the Truth is One" principle. The Om is the ever-present Voice within, the Echo of the Divine Call, from the cavity of the Heart. Listen to it, be thrilled by it; that is the inner adoration, of which the external *puja* or ritual worship is the outer symbol. Contemplate the OM, the symbol of the inner flame, which shines through the waking hours, the dream twilight and the sleep night.

Repeat the Om, slowly, contemplating its vast potentialities. The "A" emerges from the throat, "U" rolls over the tongue and the "M" ends on the lips; that is to say, Om which is a composite of A-U-M is the sum and substance of all the words that can emanate from the human tongue. It is the primordial fundamental sound, symbolic of the Universal Absolute. After the "M" there must be the unheard resonance, which represents the attributeless formless Abstract, the *Nirakhara Parabraman.* The ascending voice of the *Pranava* or Om must take a curve at "M" and descend as slowly as it rose, taking as much time as when it ascended, disappearing in the silence, which echoes in the inner consciousness.

x x x

69. *Dhyana* should not be vacillating or wavering from one ideal to another. It should not be reduced to a mere mechanical text book formula. It is a rigorous discipline of the senses, the nervous current and the wings of imagination. *Dhyana* is the valley of peace that lies on the other side of a huge mountain range with the peaks named the Six Foes. One has to climb over the range to reach the plane beyond. One has to rend the veils ere the light can shine on the path.

The mist is the confusing conglomeration of the three qualities that disturb the primal equanimity of the Universe, the white, red and black; the *Sathwic,* the *Rajasic* and the *Thamasic;* the unaffected, the active and the dull; the detached, the passionate and the slothful. The curtain of *Maya* made of these three strands has to be either brushed aside, or rent asunder, or raised, so that the reality may be revealed. *Bhakthi Marga* raises it, for God who let it down has the compassion to raise it for you. *Karma Marga* rends it, by means of activity aimed at tearing the strands. *Jnana Marga* brushes it aside, for it moves about as if it did not really exist; it brushes it aside as a mere figment of the imagination! And, it disappears, proving their argument valid.

The amalgam of the three *gunas* or qualities mentioned already when spread as a hindrance to

clear vision makes men fumble, feel that one thing is ostensibly another, and hides the truth, giving it all the hues or horror of the false! The mind is the inner instrument used by *Maya* to defraud and confuse. Under its influence, the mind skips from one fancy to another and is never at rest on whatever it dwells on. It keeps the mind always intent on external objects; it resists the inward journey of the intellect, the process of self-examination and self-discipline. But, once man succeeds, however slightly, in releasing his mind from the hold of *Maya* through *Dhyana,* the road is clear for the final illumination.

x x x

70. *Dhyana* is the discipline by which the mind is trained to inner analysis and synthesis. Again, *Dhyana* and the control of the senses must go together. The senses block the road to heaven's gate. *Yoga* is defined as *Chitha vrithi nirodhah,* the mastery over the vagaries of the mind. The very first lesson of *Yoga* is the conquest of kama or desire. The mother has to put the child to sleep as the first chore so that she can attend to more important work. So too, you have to put the mind out of action, before you can travel to the realm beyond duality.

Keep the Name of the Lord always radiant, on your tongue, and mind. That will keep the antics of mind

under control. It is said in the *Gita* that when the word for *Brahman,* namely OM, is spelt by the dying with the last breath, he attains *Brahman.* But, you can spell it then, only when you have been dwelling upon OM all through the years of life. This is referred to as *Raja Vidya* in the *Gita.* It is also *raja-guhyam,* the royal mystery, a teaching that is to be imparted, after long preparatory exercises and from master to disciple, in a serious and sincere atmosphere. It was given as a lesson in prose. It was Vyasa who cast it into verse form. The Atma cannot be gained by the weak, so long as the source of might is not in you, so long you are a weakling unfit for the supreme adventure.

You may need the tonic of tragedy to get you on the road to recovery. The Compassionate One, the Eternal All-knowing God, He knows best. Welcome the tragedy and fight your way through, with the armour of the Memory Divine. The Play is His; the role is His Gift; the lines are written by Him; He directs, He decides the dress and decoration, the gesture and the tone, the entrance and the exit. You have to act well the part and receive His approbation, when the curtain falls. Earn by your efficiency and enthusiasm the right to play higher and higher roles—that is the meaning and purpose of life.

Do not get too much attached to the world, and too involved in its tangles. Keep your emotions always within hold. The waves agitate only the upper layers of the sea; down below it is calm. So too, when you sink into your depths, you must be free from the agitations of the waves. Know most things are of no lasting value and can therefore be brushed aside; hold fast to the solid substance only. Use your discrimination to discover which things are lumber and which are treasure.

x x x

71. The *Pranava-Japa,* or the recitation of OM and the contemplation of that mystic syllable will help to calm the roaring waves. OM is the sum of all the teachings in the Vedas about Godhead; *Om ithi ekaksharam Brahma*—Om, that one syllable is *Brahman*—A (aa) arising from the region of the navel, U (oo) flowing through the throat and tongue and M (mm) ending up at the closed lip. It has to be pronounced rising in a crescendo as slowly as possible and as slowly coming down, until after the "M" there will be the echo of the silence reverberating in the cavity of the hearts. The upward sweep, the downward curve and the silent sequel represent the waking, dreaming and the sleeping and the fourth, beyond the three stages.

*Dhyana* is the seventh in the series of steps, leading to the eighth, *Samadhi* or Conquest of the Mind. Unless you have secured strong foothold on the five previous steps, you will slide back from *Dhyana,* however many years you may try to stick to it. The first step is the control of the senses, the second is the control of the emotions and impulses. The third is the mastery of balance and equipoise; the next is the regulation of breathing and movement of the vital airs. The fifth is the prevention of outer influences from deviating the mind. The next is the one-pointed attention on one's own progress and then, we come to real *Dhyana* or meditation on one's real Reality, which easily leads to its realisation in *Samadhi.* Without the preliminary rungs, you cannot hop straight on to the seventh, and then, skip on to the eighth!

Aim high, resolve on the supreme adventure—everything will be set right to lead you on to the goal. In fact, you are urged on towards this adventure by your very breath which repeats 21,600 times a day "He-I," *Soham,* emphasising the identity of the Indweller with the Principle that is Innermost in the Universe. You may declare with your tongue, "There is no God!" But, the breath repeats "So" as it goes in and "Ham" as it goes out, making it clear that the "He" who is immanent is the "I" that is resident!

The world is the triple complex of *gunas* or attributes, *Sathwic, Rajasic* and *Thamasic*—the balanced, the passionate and the dull. The sages discovered that *Thath Thwam Asi,* (That Thou Art). "Thath" is the Divine, out of which all this arose, of which all this is, into which all this merges. It can be known by the *Bhakthi Marga,* the Path of Devotion and Surrender of the self, of Dedication. The "Thou," the individual, can be understood by the *Karma Marga,* the Path of Selfless Activity, of the abnegation of the consequences of all activity, done in a spirit of adoration and with as much sincerity as an act of worship. Then, the process of identification of *Thath* and *Thwam* (That and Thou) called the recognition of the *Asi,* has to be communicated through *Jnana Marga* (the Path of Knowledge, of sharp and relentless discrimination). When *Bhakthi* and *Karma* merge, it leads to *Jnana.* Bhakthi sees everything as *"Thath,"* Karma wipes out the separateness of the *"Thwam."* So, the *"Asi"* process becomes easy.

Of what benefit is a heavy shower of rain if you keep your bucket upside down? Can it collect any water? When you listen to discourses on religion, if your minds are not receptive, you derive no benefit therefrom.

By *Dhyana* you develop *Jnana* and by *Japam* you develop *Bhakthi* and by both, you cleanse your heart of the canker of ego. You can link yourselves with God, by a chain of Love, through the recitation of the name in nuances. Each one will come in his own good time, out of his own pace, through his own inner urge, along the path God will reveal to him as his own.

*Na sreya niyamam viva*—No progress, without constraint. Control heightens power, regulation puts it into the best use.

x x x

72. *Mooka* is the Sound of Silence. When one dives into the depth of that silence, one hears oneself, the Primeval Cosmic Om, the *Pranava* that emanates from *Prana* or the Vital Vibration that fills the Universe. To hear that sound, one has to approach, as near as possible, to the core of one's being. That is why the Upanishad calls itself so; it urges you to go near, delve deep to the very floor of the lake—*Upa* means near, *Nishad* means sitting. Go and sit near, so that you can hear the whisper of the supersoul to the soul. Om summarises the Vedas and their teachings. *"Om thath sath,"* says the *Gita. Thath* (that) which *Sath* (is) Om, the One. All

this is *Brahman,* the One without a Second. When you recognise the *"Thath"* as (is or) *sath,* it becomes "this"; it is no longer object, it is subject, and the merging of object with subject manifests as the Om!

Sharpen the intellect, then the Unity in nature will become evident. The most revered and the most popular *manthra* (prayer clothed in ritual formula) in the Vedas, is the Gayathri. It seeks the Grace of the Source, of all Light, to foster one's intelligence and for nothing more.

Yoga is defined by Patanjali as the *nirodha* (control) of the *vrittis* (agitations) of the *chittha* (inner consciousness). If the mind is stilled and free from waves produced by the wind of desire, than He becomes a Yogi; and the Lord is the highest Yogi, for He is the ocean that is unaffected by the waves which agitate the surface. Yoga of this type is the best means of attaining the *Yogeswara*—not breath-control, but sense control is the prescription.

x x x

73. Transcend *anekatwabhava* (the consciousness of the many) and cultivate *ekatwabhava* (consciousness of the one), that will end strife, grief, pain, pride. See all as but expressions of the same God, as appearances

on the same screen, as bulbs lit by the same current, though of manifold colour and wattage. The world is One, but each sees it from his own angle and so, it appears as if it has multiple faces.

*Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanthi*—The One alone exists, wise men speak of it as many-faceted. *Prakruthi* is the manifestation of *Purusha,* God. *Brahman* means *Brh* or big, the biggest, the vastest. Saraswati, the Patent Power, is the Goddess of *Vaak* or Word—the Urge to Express, to manifest.

x x x

74. What is the symbolism of the fingers? The thumbs represents *Brahman,* the eternal absolute, the immanent Principle. The forefinger, the index one, which indicates this and that, you and other, is the *Jivi,* the individual, feeling separate and distinct. When these two are joined at the tip, held in that position, it is the *Jnana Mudra,* the gesture of Wisdom, for Wisdom consists in the *Jivi* becoming One with the *Brahman,* the mergence of that which felt that it had merged. The other three fingers represent *Prakruthi,* the objective world which disappears when the mergence is effected. They are the three *Gunas,* the *Sathwic,* the *Rajasic* and the *Thamasic,* that by their interplay create the phenomenal world.

Slow breath quietens and calms the emotions. The mood of relaxation produced by the *Soham* recital is a precondition for a profitable session of meditation.

x x x

75. Desire is a storm; greed is a whirlpool; pride is a precipice; attachment is an avalanche; egoism is a volcano. Keep these things away, so that when you do *japa* or *dhyana,* they do not disturb the equanimity.

The *Atmavichara* is best found in the Upanishads. Just as the river's flow is regulated by bunds and the flood waters are directed to the sea, so too the Upanishads regulate and restrict the senses, the mind and the intellect and help one to reach the sea and merge individuality in the Absolute. The Upanishads and *Gita* are only maps and guide books. Have the form of the Lord before you when you sit quietly in a place for meditation and have His Name (any Name) when you do *Japam.* The *Rupam* will hear and the *Rupam* will respond. The *Dhyana* of the Form and the *Japam* of the Name—that is the only means for ending all agitations.

The secret is that you should "be" as in sleep when you are awake deep down within you, that you are.

Only sleep is enveloped in *Maya* or delusion. Awake from that *Maya,* but immerse yourself in this sleep, that is real *Samadhi. Japa* and *Dhyanam* are means by which you can compel even the concretisation of the Divine Grace in the Form and Name you yearn for. The Lord has to assume the Form you choose, the Name you fancy; in fact you shape Him so.

Flying hither and thither, higher and higher, the bird has at last to perch on a tree for rest. So too, even the richest and the most powerful man seeks rest, *Shanthi.* Without *Shanthi,* life is a nightmare. *Shanthi* can be got only in one shop, in inner reality. The senses will drag you along into a mire, which submerges you deeper and deeper in alternate joy and grief, that is to say, prolonged discontent. Only the contemplation of unity can remove fear, rivalry, envy, greed, desire—all the feelings that prompt discontent, and grant unruffled peace. Every other avenue can give only pseudo-contentment.

x x x

76. Prayer is the very breath of religion, for it brings man and God together and with every sigh, nearer and nearer. *Dhyana* is the process of listening to the Song Celestial! the Flute of Krishna, with the mental ears alert on the melody. Yoga is the merging of the

mind in the bliss of self-forgetfulness, when the music fills the consciousness. Words like these do not completely denote that inexpressible ecstasy which one gets while "back home" after this long exile.

x x x

77. Those affected with barrenness or serious illness or skin diseases or virulent types vow to proceed on pilgrimage to shrines of Subrahmanya (conceived in the form of a Snake). The spinal column of man ending with the "thousand-petalled lotus" in the brain is very much like a serpent poised on its tail with the head widely spread.

In the Science of *Kundalini* Yoga, the vital energy of man lying dormant like a coiled snake, at the bottom of this column in the lowest *Muladhara Chakra,* the Basic Wheel, is awakened and aroused, so that it courses up through six more wheels (Centres of superior consciousness) until it reaches the *Sahasrara* or Thousand-petalled Lotus Wheel at the very top of the skull. The passage for the *Kundalini* is through the *Sushumna* Nerve in the centre of the spinal column. The worship of the Snake, ridiculed as superstition, is the symbolic counterpart of this great Yogic Sadhana which confers vigour and vitality.

Take the demarcation of Tirupathi as a holy place of Pilgrimage. Lord Venkateswara, the Deity worshipped there is called the Lord of the Seven Hills, for Seven Hills have to be climbed before the Temple is reached. Obviously, the Six *Chakras* and the *Sahasrara* are indicated here; for in *Raja Yoga,* the supreme is revealed, only when the individual raises the Vital Energy—the *Kundalini Shakthi,* up to the Seventh Stage. One of the hills is named Seshagiri, meaning Snake Hill. From the plain, the range gives the appearance of a snake with a raised hood.

And what exactly does Subramanya mean? It means, He who has attained the realisation of Brahma, the Universal Absolute, the Primal Cause, the Cosmic Consciousness. Every appellation of God has deep significance. In the Vedas, Vishnu, for example, is named *Parama.* It means *Paramanu,* the Atom. He is omnipresent, as omnipresent as the atom, found as the substance and substratum of the Universe. Vishnu is the Cause as well as the Effect, for, there was nothing else when Time began. The One became many; the many disappear, the One remains.

Sankara, the greatest expounder of *Adwaitha* (Non-dual nature of existence) established Four Seats of Practical Philosophy called Mutts in the far regions of India. The first step in the endeavour to realise this

Unity was, according to him, *Upasana* or Worship of the Concrete Symbol of God, which gives one the experience of ecstasy of Union.

x x x

SAMADHI: *Samadhi* is of two types, *Savikalpa* and *Nirvikalpa*. In *Savikalpa,* the *Thriputi*, or the Threefold nature of Knower, Knowing and Knowee will still persist. When it is realised that the Knower is *Brahman,* Knowing too is *Brahman* and the thing to be known is also *Brahman,* then there is no more *Vikalpa* or agitation or activity; that is the *Nirvikalpa Samadhi.*

*Samadhi* is as the ocean to which all Sadhana flows. The seven streams of *Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Prathyahara, Dharana* and *Dhyana* all find their consummation in it. Every trace of Name and Form disappears in that Ocean. He who serves and He who receives the service, he who meditates and He who is meditated upon, all such duality is dispelled and destroyed. One will not experience even the experience, that is to say, one will not be aware that he is experiencing. Oneself alone, nought else—that will be *Samadhi.* If there is aught else, it cannot be *Samadhi.* It is something like a dream, a fantasy, a passing vision at best. *Samadhi* can admit of nothing other than *Brahman.*

x x x

# 6. Physical, Mental And Vocal Thapas

1. What does the sadhana of ignoring the *deha* imply? It means turning aside the temptations of the senses, the overcoming of the six enemies, *kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada* and *matsarya* or desire, anger, greed, attachment, pride and malice. Anger turns a man into a drunken brute. The other impulses, are equally vicious. Seek only salutary karma; eat only *Sathwic* food, food that will not disturb the equanimity you earn through your sadhana. Do not break the even tenor of your spiritual practice. Remember how Ramadas never gave up his *namasadhana* in spite of jeers and jail.

x x x

2. Even if you have no steady faith in God or in any particular name or form of that Immanent Power, start by controlling the vagaries of the mind, the pulls of the ego, the attractions of sense attachment. Be helpful to others; then, your conscience itself

will appreciate you and keep you happy and content, though others may not thank you. Life is a steady march towards a goal, it is not a meaningless term of imprisonment or a stupid kind of picnic. Be patient, humble; don't rush to conclusions about others and their motives.

x x x

3. Detach yourselves from the senses; then only, can the Atma shine. I do not mean that you should destroy the senses. The mind must be withdrawn from its present comrades the senses; it must be loyal to its real master, the intellect or *buddhi.* That is to say, you must separate the grain from the chaff, through the exercise of *viveka* and then, fix your desire on the things that last and nourish.

x x x

4. The deeds, good and bad, performed by the body do not infect the *Jiva.* All that is done with the body is experienced by the *Jiva* through the body itself. It is not proper to think that the sins performed by the body and experienced by the mind can be attributed to the *Jiva. Jiva* has got eternal contentment. The sins committed by the body do not affect it. The Sadhanas are not really for *Jivanmukthi* but for attaining and appreciating this distinctiveness of the

body from the *Jiva* and to get over the illusions relating to the body.

x x x

5. When Tukaram was asked how man can keep this monkey-mind from running after sensuous pleasures, he replied to the enquirer, "Let the monkey run. You keep quiet where you are. Do not let the body go along with the monkey-mind." Tell the mind, "I shall not give you the body as your servant." Then, the mind will desist and it can be defeated. Just as there is a method to be followed even in pulling down a house, there is a method even in pulling down the complex structure of the mind.

x x x

6. The ladder must be as tall as the height to which you want to climb, is it not? Your Sadhana to curb the mind must be carried on step by step until *Sakshathkaram* is gained. The rice in the pot must be well boiled and become soft and sweet. Until that happens, the fire must burn. In the vessel of *Deha,* with the water, that is to say the *Indriyas,* boil the mind and make it soft. The fire is Sadhana. Keep it burning bright, the *Jiva* will at last become *Deva.*

x x x

7. He, who is able to fully control his senses, will be in a position to attain liberation or *Moksha.*

x x x

8. You should handle your mind very steadily and slowly and bring it under your control. You should never be in a haste and use force to control the mind. If there is a cow in our house, which wants to go out and eat the harvest in the field, what do we do to bring such a cow back? We try to find out the kind of food that it is after and feed it with better kind of food in the house. Gradually, thereafter, it will give up the tendency to go out of the house. In the same manner our mind wanders out and looks at many things. It wants to go and indulge in different thoughts. In order to control the mind, which is after fulfilling worldly and sensuous desires we substitute the nobler idea of God in the place of such desires. We make the mind think of God and gradually turn it away from worldly desires. But today, man is pressing hard to wean his mind away from these worldly desires, but he is not succeeding. He is being defeated and humiliated. Truly, these desires and attachments which the mind is developing are characteristic of the present day. Even our intelligence is unable to exercise sufficient control over the mind. In these circumstances, either we should try and cultivate the habit of loneliness or we should join some sacred company and think of good things and wean our mind away. One of these things has to be done if you want to control the mind.

x x x

9. Egoism will be destroyed if you constantly tell yourself, "It is He, not I." "He is the force, I am but the instrument." Keep His name always on the tongue. Contemplate on His glory whenever you see or hear anything beautiful or grand. See in everyone the Lord Himself moving in that form. Do not talk evil of others, see only good in them. Welcome every chance to help others, to console others, to encourage others along the spiritual path. Be humble, do not become proud of your wealth, status, authority, learning or caste.

x x x

10. Two statements can summarise all the eighteen Puranas composed by Vyasa. Do good to others, avoid doing harm. Doing good is the drug; avoiding harm is the regimen, that must accompany the treatment. That is the cure for the disease of suffering from joy and grief, honour and dishonour, prosperity and adversity, and the dual throng, that bothers man and deprives him of equanimity.

x x x

11. The ego is the enemy number one of spiritual progress. Egoism is the Chief executive of the *Kali Raja,* the sovereign of the *Kali* (Iron) Age. It is egoism and its attendant evils that stalk the world today. Egoism breeds the scourges of greed and hate. Even leaders of ascetic orders and heads of

monastic institutions suffer from egoism and indulge in the pastime of competition and conflict with other orders and institutions. Some of them wear elaborate outward symbols of spiritual splendour, especially when the camera is aimed. There is a popular adage which says that a *Sadhaka* must eat like a dog and wander about like a fox, meaning that be must be content with whatever he is able to get and rest wherever he can.

x x x

12. Sadhana has to be done after attaining a good character, that is very important. In the midst of impurity, wickedness and evil, spiritual effort will be fruitless. It is as the jewel in the head of the cobra, in the centre of poison and cruelty.

x x x

13. Do not use the study of the *Sastras* and scriptures for increasing your egoism; let it make you humble, though at the same time, more resistant to temptation.

14. Of course, it is all a question of deep-rooted taints or traits or attitudes. You draw from the bank only according to what you have put in. You have to study your passbook before you write out a cheque or calculate your assets. Go on, pile up your assets; do not feverishly exhaust them by recklessness.

x x x

15. Diamond is first just a dull piece of stone, a hard pebble. Only when it is cut by a skilful artisan, does it become a multifaceted flame of fire! Allow yourselves to be so treated, that all your dullness will disappear and you will emerge as a resplendent diamond.

x x x

16. Act; act with all your might and with all your mind, make full use of the skill, capacity, courage and confidence that you are endowed with. Then God will bless you.

x x x

17. Suffering entitles you more to the Grace of the Lord. When suffering comes in waves, one behind the other, be glad that the shore is near. Bear them bravely. Do not, like cowards, throw the blame on some outside Power or develop dislike for the Lord.

x x x

18. You should gradually get rid of the attachments that lead you astray. Then only can you stand erect, without bending under the load.

x x x

19. If the sense of beauty and the sense of harmony are not translated into the daily life of men and women

and children, then that life is a waste, a burden, a hoax.

x x x

20. *Badri* is the place where the *Nara-Narayana* bond is established and commemorated. That you can establish here itself. If you get rid of delusion, you become *Narayana;* if you are sunk in delusion, you continue to be *Nara* that is all.

x x x

21. Act as you speak, speak as you feel, do not play false to your own conscience, do not cover your conscience by forcibly enslaving it and embarking on actions not approved by it.

x x x

22. A smile is the rose that grows on the thorn of a sigh. Shed tears, but only for joy; joy that you are released from the chain of desires.

x x x

23. Without the control of the senses, sadhana is ineffective; it is like keeping water in a leaky pot. Patanjali (the celebrated author of the *Yogasuthras*) has said that when tongue is conquered, victory is yours. When the tongue craves for some delicacy, assert that you will not cater to its whims. The monks

and monastic dignitaries in this land have fallen prey to the tongue and are unable to curb its vagaries; they wear the robes of renunciation but clamour for tasty delicacies and thus bring the institution of monkhood into disrepute. If you persist in giving yourself simple food that is not savoury or hot, but amply sustaining, the tongue may squirm for a few days, but, it will soon welcome it. That is the way to subdue it and overcome the evil consequences of it being your master. Since the tongue is equally insistent on scandal and lascivious talk, you have to curb that tendency also. Talk little; talk sweetly; talk only when there is pressing need; talk only to those whom you must, do not shout or raise the voice in anger or excitement. Such control will improve health and mental peace. It will lead to better public relations and less involvement in contacts and conflicts with others. You may be laughed at as a kill-joy but, there are compensations enough for you. It will conserve your time and energy; you can put your inner energy to better use. You may take My Special Birthday Message for you:—Control your "taste." Control your talk.

x x x

24. You have to show by precept and by example that the path of self-realisation is the path to perfect joy. Hence, on you lies a great responsibility: the

responsibility of demonstrating by your calmness, composure, humility, purity, virtue, courage and conviction, under all circumstances, that the sadhana you practise has made you a better, happier and more useful person. Practise and demonstrate, do not simply assert in words and deny in deeds.

x x x

25. You must first have a clear understanding of the nature of the goal—God or Goodness or the Universal Absolute whatever the name—its grandeur, its beneficence, its magnificence. Then, that understanding itself will prompt and urge you towards it. The Universal, of which you are a unit, is pure, true, egoless, unlimited and everlasting. Contemplate on it and your innate egolessness, truth, purity, and eternality will manifest itself, more and more every day.

x x x

26. By means of sadhana, this consummation can be achieved. Believe that you are the imperishable pure Atma. Then no gain or loss can affect you; no sense of humiliation or despair can torment you. Only men with weak foundations can dread these. The strong man casts them away with impunity. When the senses are dominant, equanimity is a

dream. Be their master; you can be yourself, undisturbed and free.

x x x

27. Be like the tortoise, which can live in water or on land. That is to say, cultivate the inner calm that helps you to be with the thought of God, whether you are amidst men or alone. *Ekantha* or solitude is when you are not aware of the crowd around you. It is what you create out of the solitude of your own mind. Here, for example, where you are undisturbed by others, each of you has perfect *Ekantha!*

x x x

28. My advice is: Apply this adoration, in life. Show your companions here and in your villages how disciplined you are, how sincerely you obey your parents, how deeply you revere your teachers. Be a light, a lamp, radiating virtue and self-control in the village. Do not slide back into indiscipline, bad manners, irresponsibility and evil habits. Behave in your village, or wherever you are, as commendably as you do here. Rise from bed, there too, in the *Brahmamuhurtam* (the auspicious period, dedicated to Brahman meditation).

x x x

29. Will power motivated by God is the active force available for your uplift. This is called *Sankalpa Bala*. Develop it by concentration and *japa.* The mind must be compelled to submit to the dictates of the will. Now you are easily led astray by the vagaries of the mind. That is why, I say, WATCH! W is for watch your Word; A is for watch your Actions; T is for watch your Thoughts; C is for watch your Character; H is for watch your Heart. If the watch reminds you every second of the need to watch these five, you can be quite happy.

x x x

30. Do not water and feed the tree of desire. Intolerance is the product of anger, hate and envy. Try your best to suppress the first appearance of anger. It does not come upon you unawares. The body becomes warm, the lips twitch, the eyes redden—so, when you get the intimation, drink a cup of cold water, sip it slowly, close the door and lie in bed, until the seizure passes away, and you laugh at your own folly. This may appear difficult, but you have to practise it. For, the consequences of your yielding to anger will be so disastrous that you will have to repent long for it.

x x x

31. Note down all the things for which you have cried so far. You will find that you have craved only for paltry things, for momentary distinction, for fleeting fame. You should cry only for God, for your own cleansing and consummation. You should weep; wail for the six cobras that have sheltered themselves in your mind poisoning it with their venom; lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride and malice. Quieten them as the snake charmer does with his swaying flute. The music that can tame them is singing aloud the name of God. And when they are too intoxicated to move and harm, catch them by the neck and pull out their fangs as the charmer does. Thereafter, they can be your play things; you can handle them as you please.

x x x

32. Engage yourselves in *puja, dhyana* or *japam* with single-pointed attention, so that when you rise, your face must be lit with the illumination of awareness. The door is fitted in the house to facilitate the entrance of those whom you desire should come in. Watch the door, so that dogs and donkeys, dust and dry leaves do not rush in through that door. The senses and the mind are doors through which maleficent influences can infiltrate into your consciousness and find a home therein.

x x x

33. Everything is judged by us on the touchstone of the ego. The mind is a double-edged sword—it can save, but it can also bind. Yoga is the restraint of the waves natural to the mind. By learning and practising the disciplines of *yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana* and *samadhi,* the seeker can overcome and eliminate the mind.

x x x

34. Discard through sadhana the attachment to individuality, to sense pleasures; welcome through sadhana, the aspiration to expand the heart into the universal. Do not cloud your minds with cheap desires, transitory hungers and thirsts, that need but morsels or mouthfuls. Yearn for the enthronement of your soul as the unquestioned monarch of the universe. When you merge in the universal, celebrate your triumph over the foes within, that hampered your march to victory. Acquire Me as your charioteer, I shall lead you to that consummation. Earn that unfailing grace, by your sincerity, simplicity and sadhana. Monks are instructed to shave their heads, so that they can move about unrecognised by former friends and companions. But now we find that they desire recognition and even appreciation, adulation and adoration—things that cater to the ego, things they are asked to flee from! A monk should, strictly

speaking, eat like a dog and sleep like a fox—that is the popular saying. Eat whatever one gets and appease the hunger; sleep wherever one finds shelter. Do not store food for another day or build a house wherein to pass one's days. Escape the entangling coils of the senses and of the ego that prompt them.

x x x

35. Ideals must become higher and grander. Desires must become more and more selfless and sublime. Attachment must be transmuted into nobler and subtler emotions. The story will be gripping only when there is steady development towards the denouement isn't it? That is why one passes through the crucible of joy and grief and emerges all the purer and stronger, for the experience. When a child's growth is stunted, it causes grief. When he starts to grow normally, it causes joy. When the growth is abnormal, it causes grief again. The swing of the pendulum makes life interesting; it is a gymnasium, a school.

x x x

36. Do unto others what you wish them to do unto you. Do not do unto others what you do not wish them to do unto you. Do not have a double standard, treat

all as your own self. That is to say, you must have faith in yourself and then only can you have faith in others. You must respect yourself and respect others. Egoism is the measure of altruism. Mankind is one community, you harm yourself and you harm all. You make a man stand erect and that act makes you stand erect. The treatment you wish others to render to you is itself the measure of your duty to them.

x x x

37. Reduce your wants, minimise your desires. All these material knick-knacks are short-lived. When death deprives you of resistance, your kith and kin take off the nose-stud and in their haste they may even cut the nose to retrieve it! If you go on heaping desire upon desire, it will be impossible to depart gladly when the call comes. Become rich rather in virtue, is the spirit of service, in devotion to the Higher Power. That is what pleases Me and saves you.

x x x

38. A bar of iron sinks in water; but beat it into a hollow vessel and it will float merrily and even carry some weight. So too, man's mind sinks easily in the sea of senses; beat it hollow, hammering it with the Name of the Lord. It will float, safely, on a sea of troubles.

Do not be like gramophone records singing someone else's song, ignorant of the genuine thrill of music. Sing from your own experience the Glory and Grace of the Lord.

x x x

39. The Headmaster is a good example of the attitude you should develop. He knows all the time that the chairs, tables and benches are not his; but nevertheless, he knows that it is his duty to see that no item of furniture or equipment is lost or damaged; that it is all handed over intact when he leaves.

Therefore, he keeps vigilant watch, though unattached. The senses, the intelligence, the heart, the mind—these are the furniture put in your charge, look after them with care. If any is damaged by oversight, make the appropriate entry in the list and explain the circumstances and crave for Grace.

x x x

40. Jealousy and anger are the twins born of egoism, *Ahamkara* is the Mother. Destroy the twins, and take the karam (meaning in Telugu, the hot taste) of the *Ahamkaram* and keep it simply as *Aham,* so that you can get the thrill of *Aham Brahmasmi* with that instrument. That is the stage to be reached, the height to be scaled. The *karam* in the *Aham* is like the single

seed which, if allowed to sprout, multiplies a thousand fold and produces many bags of seed. it has to be crushed in the very first instance.

x x x

41. Eat, but transform food into good deeds, good thought and sweet speech; move, but do not cause pain to others or add to their misery. Do not condemn yourselves as weak, sinful, conceited, wicked, outlawed, mean, etc. When you so condemn yourself, remember you are actually condemning Me, who is your inner Self. Live, so that with every breath and every step, you come nearer and nearer to Me.

x x x

42. So long as you are in *Avidya,* so long as you are untrained and ignorant, you cannot taste the Bliss; you cannot attain it. You are still bound by the three-corded rope. the black cord of the *Thamas,* the red cord of *Rajas* and the white cord of *Sathwa.* Deny that you are bound; the rope falls away. Hence, regulate your life in such a way that you do not harm your Inner stature. That is to say, live in the constant contemplation of your kinship with others and with the Universe. Do good to others, treat all nature kindly, speak soft and sweet, become a child devoid of envy, hate and greed. When your ego crosses the

threshold of your family or group and takes kindly to those beyond, you have taken the first step to cross the threshold of *Maya.*

x x x

43. Five sheaths encase the Atma and hide its splendour from revealing itself. Make all these pure and shining. The *Annamaya Kosa* must be purified by good, clean, pure food; the *Pranamaya Kosa* by calm, steady breathing and an equanimous temper; the *Manomaya Kosa* by holy thoughts and emotions, untouched by attachment to senses or unaffected by joy or grief; the *Vijnanamaya Kosa* purified by contemplation of the reality and the *Anandamaya Kosa* by getting immersed in the ecstasy of God-realisation.

x x x

44. Above all, recognise this truth: Sai is in all. When you hate another, you are hating Sai; when you hate Sai, you are hating yourself. When you inflict pain on another, remember that the other is yourself, in another form, with another name. Envy causes pain on those who are envied. When another's fortune is green, why should your eyes be red? Why get wild when another eats his fill? Give up this vice of envy; be happy when another is happy. That is more pleasing to the Lord, than all the *manthras* you

recite, or all the flowers you heap on his picture or image, or even the hours you spend in *japam* or *dhyanam.*

x x x

45. The tongue should not talk evil; the eyes should not look out for evil.The ears should not seek evil. The presence of God in every being makes everyone holy; thinking low of others amounts to thinking low of God. When you follow the convention of addressing others as *Sodara Sodarimanulaara*, "Brothers and Sisters," you must cultivate the feeling that God is the Father and that you are all brothers and sisters, each to the rest. This brotherhood is more real and binding than the blood brotherhood, for here, the paternal property for which you struggle can be shared without the share of each being diminished in any way. When the *Poorna* (full) is subtracted from the Poorna, Poorna is found to be the balance.

x x x

46. A green gourd sinks in water; but a dry one floats. Become dry, rid yourselves of attachments, desires, avoid anxieties and worries. Then, you can float unaffected on the waters of change and chance. Even water when it becomes steam can rise into the sky. Become light, lose weight, bale out so that you

may rise higher and higher. Yoga is defined as *chiththa vriththi nirodha*, the prevention of impulses that agitate the inner consciousness of man. These impulses add to the ballast. Be free from desires that drag you down; have only the yearning to come face to face with Truth. That Truth is shining inside you, waiting to be discovered. Like the dhobi in knee-deep water dying of thirst, man too suffers with the panacea in easy grasp.

x x x

47. When you call out in all sincerity, the response will certainly come. Give up all low desire and call from the anguished heart. Do not pray from the lips, as you do now, from the *puja* room which is but a corner of the kitchen. You worship the Lord with an eye on the dishes cooking on the oven, with a nose inhaling hungrily the smells of boiling curries. Your thoughts of God are vitiated by *Vishaya-vasana*, the attachment to sensory objects. There is a vast gap between what you say and what you do, what you are capable of and what you accomplish. You have heard of Uttarakumara, who was a poltroon in fact; but who boasted that he could overwhelm the enemy forces in a trice. He could hold forth for hours on the theory of battles, but, as to practice, be had no iota of it.

The inner motive which prompts the deed—that is what the Lord seeks to weigh.

x x x

48. Discover for yourself your stage of spiritual development, to which class in the school you would fit in. Then determine to proceed from that class to the next higher one. Strive your best and you will win the Grace of God. Do not bargain or despair. One step at a time is enough, provided it is towards the goal, not away from it. Beware of the pride of wealth, of scholarship, of status, that drags you into egoism. Do not seek the faults of others, seek your own. Be happy when you see others prosper; share your joy with others.

x x x

49. You have to sacrifice, not a bleating sheep or a horse or cow, but, your animality, the bestial lust and greed, hate and malice. Sacrifice these and you earn the heaven of unflinching peace. Killing a sheep is a cheap trick which will not deceive anyone; for you are asked to kill the sheep inside you, the cowardly beast that revels in the mass and perpetrates mob fury in blind anger.

x x x

50. The desires that cling to the mind are the blemishes that tarnish man's inner consciousness. Control the senses, do not yield to their insistent demands for satisfaction. When a corpse is placed on a pyre, and when the pyre is lit, both the corpse and the pyre are reduced to ashes. So too, when the senses are negated, the mind too disappears. When the mind disappears, delusion dies and liberation is achieved.

51. Man differs from man, in this struggle against the inner foes. Each gets the result that his Sadhana deserves, that his acts in this and previous births deserve. Life is not a mechanical mathematical formula, where 2 plus 2 always make 4. To some, it may be 3, to others, 5. It depends on how each values the 2. Moreover, in the spiritual path, each one has to move forward from where he already is, according to his own pace, in the light of the lamp which each one holds in his own hands. The *Rakshasas* were too conceited to bend before the Lord; they put too much trust in arms and number; they ignored the subtler and stronger forces of the spirit, which could carry mountains, bridge oceans and annihilate the anger of the elements.

    You must strive to diagnose your own character and discover the faults that are infesting it; do not try to analyse the character of others and seek to spot their

defects. This self-examination is very necessary to bring to light the defects that might undermine one's spiritual career. People buy clothes with deep colours, so that they may not reveal dust or dirt; they do not prefer white clothes, for they show plainly their soiled condition. But do not try to hide your dirt in darkness; be ashamed of soiled natures and endeavour to cleanse them fast.

x x x

52. The human body has been given to you for a grand purpose—realising the Lord within. If you have a fully equipped car in good running condition, would you keep it in the garage? The car is primarily meant for going on a journey; get into it and go. Then only it is worthwhile to own it. So too, with the body. Proceed, go forward to the goal. Learn how to use the faculties of the body, the senses, the intellect, the mind, for achieving the goal and march on.

x x x

53. A Judge to the Supreme Court may, while at home, play with his grandchild and bend on all fours for the little fellow to mount his back and then he may crawl on the floor when the child cries "Holloa"—but, all the while his status as a Judge does not suffer diminution, nor does he forget it. So too, you must

always be conscious of the high calling on which you have come; you should not disgrace it by any means or meaningless act or word or thought.

x x x

54. Knowing is not being. You must try to translate into daily life what you learn from them. The moral life is the best prescription for joyful life.

x x x

55. Give the world only secondary importance; the primary place should be reserved for loosening its coils. The *Jagad Janani* (Mother of the Universe) will hurry towards you and caress you, only when you cast off the dolls and cry. Yearn from the very depths of the hearts: yearn with your whole being. Leave no *sesham* (balance) of attachment in the mind; then only can you get the grace of *Sesha-sayee,* He who reclines on the Supernal Psychic Serpent.

Do not care for the cynicism of the worldly minded; they may try to drag you into the byelanes, away from the royal road of *Viveka-Vairagya.* Even *Avatharas* are targets for small men who revel in pouring venom on the great; how then can those who seek to expand their affection and universalise their vision escape?

x x x

56. The fate of the country will depend on the character of its people and character is elevated and purified by sadhana, the hard way of regulation of behaviour and the control of desire. God is the guardian and as guardian, He has to warn and punish to wean people away from harmful habits. If it is necessary, the guardian will resort to the infliction of pain too, as a curative and corrective.

    Limit, control, regulate, set bounds and bunds: that is the way to succeed. If people let loose their thoughts, words and deeds, calamity will be the consequence. *Sastra* means that which "lays down limits"; interest in the art of living is created by these rules. Imagine a game of football which has no rules, the ball is never "out," there is no foul, no corner, no offside, no hands, nothing by which you can decide who plays well or ill, who wins or loses. The game will lose all zest; it will be pandemonium, a free fight. Rules of behaviour must be observed by politicians, rulers, subjects, *sanyasins* who are leaders of the community and heads of monasteries, scholars and others, for they are exemplars, and guides and their responsibilities are greater.

x x x

57. Anger, malice, greed, envy—all these are obstacles in the path of love and co-operation. They lower

man from the divine to the animal level. Bear with others in patience and understanding; practise *Sahana* and sympathy. Try to discover point of contact, not of conflict. Spread brotherliness and deepen kindness through knowledge. Then life becomes worthwhile, without fail.

x x x

58. Without giving ear to such patent lies born out of malice and greed, I would advise you to form a *sathsangh,* where you will meet and exchange truths and virtuous talk; where you will study holy books and discourse on the glory of God. Why waste precious time in scandals about others and criticism of others' behaviour? Cultivating envy, malice, hatred and anger against others is an evil pastime that recoils on oneself. In everyone there is resident the selfsame Divine spark: so cavilling at the neighbour is tantamount to cavilling at Divinity.

The game of life is worth playing and becomes interesting only when there are bounds and rules which limit and control. Imagine a game of football without any rules or bounds for the field. It will be chaos; it will be a free fight; it will be a riot. No one can say who wins and how. The *Dharma Marga* and the *Brahma Marga* are the boundaries of the

field. The virtues fight against the vicious tendencies. Play the game, paying heed to the warning of "Foul" and "Out."

x x x

59. *Kama* and *Krodha* (desire and anger) are the two archenemies of man which undermine his divine nature and drag him down into the mire. The Ramayana story is woven round the anger of Manthara and the lust of Surpanakha. The Ramayana of each individual too is woven round these two elemental passions. When the first intimations of these evil influences threaten to invade your mind, stop and inquire calmly into the nature of the urge, the manner of the prompting, the type of the consequences, for you and others. Reason out these things, in silence and solitude.

x x x

60. Blood, phlegm, bile–these decide by their proportion and predominance the physical health of a man. So too there are three qualities that decide by their proportion and predominance, the mental health of men. Just as you obey the rules of health for fear of falling ill, you have to practise certain mental restrictions and regulations so that you may have peace, contentment, joy. enthusiasm and faith. You

have to apply the brake on the wayward mind so that it may not drag you into disaster. You have ever to work in the cool shade of two dreads; the dread of Sin and the dread of God. You do not remember that you are really and genuinely *shanthi* and *ananda,* that you are fundamentally (and therefore, mentally too) *sathya*, *nithya,* and *nirmala.* The anxiety and fear which haunt you now are caused by this loss of memory. The intention of the Lord is that you should have *shanthi* and *ananda,* every moment of your life; but, you forget the springs that well up within you that have their Source in the Divinity enshrined in your hearts, and pine for what you feel you have not.

x x x

61. You have all gathered here from the distant corners of our country, from every state and every linguistic unit, in order to pool your separate skills of hand and head for the successful completion of this great task which will give food and happiness for crores of brothers and sisters for centuries. This is a great chance for all of you, a chance that comes to few, however skilled they might be. It is a rare chance that comes to few in any country. The lake that will fill this gorge with the waters of the Krishna when you build the dam across it, will be your *Nishkama*

*karma, Samundra,* an ocean of strenuous effort. You will all see it and feel its coolness, depth and strength. It will gladden you and inspire you and make you feel that your life has been worthwhile.

Don't go about this holy work, in a haphazard way, without *Sraddha* and *Bhakthi.* You have, by that *Sraddha* and *Bhakthi,* to curb this mighty river, which has carved its way through these hard rocks since the beginning of time, and you have to obstruct its speed and its rage for the benefit of man and beast. Man has by his skill and daring to make this wayward child of Nature halt for a while, and pass on. This task will become lighter if man curbs his own waywardness and his own egoism, anger, malice, envy, and greed and the roaring flood of his passions. Dam them in your own hearts, and canalise them into useful fields. Utilise the force of those qualities to gain better results from your efforts and Sadhana. Grow in those fields the fruit of *Shanthi* and *Prema.* That is the agriculture that *Sadhakas* know, and which you can also learn with ease. For it is an ancient science, which your own forefathers practised for ages. I have come to remind you of it and to tell you all of the need once again to follow that path.

x x x

62. What is the service that the ocean, with all its mass of water, does? It cannot slake the thirst of a single human being. What is the profit if a miser lives a hundred years? This is my message to you—do not exhibit anger or grief or pain. Be happy, spread happiness around you. Sweetness alone is the offering that God likes.

x x x

63. Be silent yourself; that will induce silence in others. Do not fall into the habit of shouting, talking long and loud. Reduce contacts to the minimum. Carry with you an atmosphere of quiet contemplation, wherever you happen to be. There are some who live in a perpetual hullabaloo, in a tornado of noise. Whether they are in an exhibition or a fair or in a hotel, or a temple or the Prasanthi Nilayam, they wag their tongues and will not stop. These will not proceed far on the Godward road.

x x x

64. *Sravana, manana* and *nididhyasana;* listening, meditating on what has been listened to and practising what is dictated by the mind so transfused, these are the methods by which Ravanatwa or the Ravana tendency has to be curbed. What is that tendency? It is *kama,* lust, greed, inordinate desire for things of the sensory world, egoism, and the rest of the fatal brood.

x x x

65. What exactly is your duty? Let Me summarise it for you. First, tend your parents with love and reverence and gratitude. Second, *sathyam vada, dharmam chara*, speak the truth and act virtuously. Third, whenever you have a few moments to spare, repeat the name of the Lord, with the form in your mind. Fourth, never indulge in talking ill of others or try to discover faults in others. And, finally, do not cause pain to others, in any form.

x x x

66. Revere *Jnana* as you revere your father; adore Love as you adore your mother; move fondly with *Dharma,* as if it is your own brother; confide in *Daya* as if it is your own beloved son. These are your genuine kith and kin. Move with them, live with them, do not forsake or neglect them.

x x x

67. Egoism, pride and greed have to be removed from the heart. *Sathya, japa, dhyana*, form the ploughing and the levelling. *Prema* is the water that has to soak into the field make it soft and rich. *Nama* is the seed and *Bhakthi* is the sprout. *Kama*, *krodha* are the cattle and the fence is discipline. *Ananda* is the harvest.

x x x

68. The laziness should go out of man's nature, in whatever shape it appears. This is the first step in converting *manava* into *Madhava,* man into God.

x x x

69. Those who revere their parents and foster them— these are theists, *asthikas,* believers, in gratitude, love, affection, duty, *dharma,* etc., and these qualities are enough to save "them" from perdition.

x x x

70. As the heart is to the body, so is the temple to a village or community. Building of temples, installation of idols therein, celebrating various *utsavas* in connection with the worship therein are all *sathkarmas,* good works. They provide training in service. They give opportunities for sacrifice, detachment. They are a form of *thapas.*

71. To cross safely the flood of "Birth-death-continuum" the bridge called *nishta* or discipline of an unflinching kind, is essential. It must be a sturdy, safe bridge. Or else, you will fall into the raging waters and be drawn into the sea, infested with sharks, lust and anger.

x x x

72. Show that you have greater brotherliness, speak less, with more sweetness and self-control, that you

can bear defeat as well as victory with calm resignation.

x x x

73. The senses are the villains; they instil the delusion that you are the *Upadhi*. Curb them as the bull is curbed by the nose ring, the horse by the bit in the mouth, the elephant by the goad. When the Pandavas were traversing the Himalayas towards the end of their careers, Dharmaraja was still affected by mental anxieties and so he prayed to Krishna to spend some time with them. On His departure from their dwelling, Krishna gave Dharmaraja a note, which he was to read to himself whenever he was affected by joy or grief. The note read: "*Eppudoo undathu*" (This will not last). That is one method by which mental agitation can be calmed.

x x x

74. "Please tell me who I am." That is the way to acquire full contentment and peace.

The "I" is the foundation on which you build your Divinity and the Mansion of *Dharma*. This truth can be known through karma and *upasana*, activity and dedication, deeds and devotion which purify and clarify. Just as water and fire get transformed into steam, which moves a locomotive and drags heavy

wagons along the rails, karma and *upasana* generate *jnanam,* which moves man's life smoothly along the rails of peace and joy. Karma and *upasana* create detachment, they teach the true sense of values. Man learns that peace can be won only by withdrawing the mind from the objective world not by allowing it to graze in the poisonous meadows of sensual pleasure.

x x x

75. There is no wealth more satisfying than contentment. Eat your fill, you cannot eat more. If you are forced to eat more, it becomes a torture. There is a limit which you cannot overstep, without injury to yourself. Find out your measure, your limits, your bounds, and act; do not develop jealousy at others, whose measures are more, who have less limitations, less narrow bounds. Hold firm the step which you have reached in Sadhana; then, transfer attention to the next. Have a clear vision of the goal. March on.

x x x

76. The Andhra Association can well take up this work—having *Sathsanghs* on Saturday, Sundays and Thursdays, where Sadhana for this inner cleanliness can be discovered and practised. Elders must consider how best they can be exemplars in

this field for the young men and women under their care, those who look up to them for guidance, those to whom they are heroes. They must engage themselves in some disciplines like *japam* and *dhyanam.* They must evince enthusiasm and satisfaction in those disciplines. They must be courageous in calamity and take both good and bad as gifts from God. Then only can the children in their care learn to live happily and in peace. The parents are like the A.D.Cs for the child, which is the Maharaja. The A.D.C's function does not end when he dresses magnificently and struts about; he has to guard the person who is entrusted to his care. If the two A.D.Cs neglect their duties, to however small degree or if they are not alert and vigilant, there is a great danger. So the parents must improve themselves, for the sake of their children. Example is more profitable than precept.

77. The mind should be free from anxiety and worry, hate and fear, greed and pride. It should be saturated with love for all beings. It has to dwell on God. It has to be restrained from pursuing objective pleasures. No lower thought should be allowed to creep in. All thoughts must be directed towards proper *thapas* of the mind or *manas.*

Now for the physical *thapas.* Use the body and its strength and capabilities for the service of others, for the worship of the Lord, for the singing of His Glory, for visiting places hallowed by His Name, for holding the senses away from deleterious paths and for treading the path of God. The service of the sick and the distressed, the observance of moral codes and such beneficial acts must make it sacrosanct.

Vocal *thapas* too has to be engaged in. Avoid talking too much; desist from statements; do not take delight in backbiting and in scandal mongering; never speak harshly; speak soft and sweet; speak with the memory of Madhava ever in the background of the mind.

Of these three, physical *thapas,* mental *thapas* and vocal *thapas,* even if one is absent, the Atmic effulgence *(Atmajyothi)* cannot radiate light. The lamp, the wick and the oil are all essential for a light; the body is the lamp; mind is the oil and the tongue is the wick. All three must be in good trim.

x x x

78. Whatever things we do with this body, we are leading to a rebirth of this body. Any actions, good or bad, can be compared to seeds. In order not to sow such seeds, we should do all actions without

desire. All actions should be done, in and only for the pleasure of God. If you sweep a place, think that you are doing that for clearing the heart, the shrine of God. When you help or harm others, think that you are doing it for yourselves. Then you will never let yourself harm anyone else.

x x x

79. If we can develop self-confidence and then attempt to control our sensory organs, we can spend our lives remaining near divinity and ultimately reach divinity. In our body, all the other organs are controlled by the tongue. If only we can control our palate, avoid excessive eating, excessive talking and refrain from using words which ought not to be uttered, our health will improve and we can have peace of mind.

x x x

80. You must yourself reason out and discover what exactly will expand your heart and what will breed disquiet; then, hold fast to the former and give up the latter. Or else, straying in devious paths like an insane ape, you will have to twist and turn in confusion. What is the cause of all the troubles and discontent to which many are subjected nowadays? It is the improper use they make of the senses.

x x x

81. The greatness of any individual depends upon the reform of his character. It does not depend upon his power, money or position. Thus, you must try to first increase the good qualities or the virtues in you.

x x x

82. In whatever field it may be, if an individual is working so that ego gets hold of him, then it will not only land him into a dangerous position but will also create considerable difficulties for him. Ego works on his shadow. In the morning, on account of the rays of sun, our shadow will be a very long one. As the sun goes higher in the sky, the length of the shadow caused by the sun's rays will become smaller and smaller. In the same way, the stature of an egoist is something which has to go down and down as time goes on.

x x x

83. The first blemish that I would like to warn you against is "inability to bear the success of the others." Envy is the greatest of sins. Vanity, envy, and egoism—these three are kin. They cut at the root of man's real nature.

x x x

84. When you go to a temple, you see the idol within but your thoughts are with your footwear that you had to keep outside the outer gate. These are matters that reveal the concentration that you are capable of. Every little point has to be taken care of lest the benefit of sadhana be lost.

x x x

85. Of the 24 hours of the day, have 6 hours for your individual needs, 6 hours for the service of others, 6 hours for sleep and 6 hours for dwelling in the presence of the Lord, those six hours will endow you the strength of steel.

x x x

86. Use these days as starting points for propitiating the Form of Godhead which you have chosen for offering homage, the Form which appeals to your innermost yearnings. Do not ascribe evil to any day or star. Every day is good, when you spend it for God. Every star is good, provided its light guides your feet to God. This is my advice to you, this day.

Men are eager to get happiness, and when there is a prospect of earning undiminishable happiness, they jump at the idea; but they are soon tired of the effort. They seek shortcuts, lean on others to carry their weight, and aspire for much fruit in return for

little cultivation. But rigorous discipline and steady faith are absolutely necessary for success in the spiritual struggle. Mere listening to discourses or even delivering discourses will not be of any use. To have that discipline, one has to control the senses which drag the mind towards the pleasurable attractions of the external world. To have the steady faith, one must control the wayward mind, that paints attractive pictures in false colours to lure you on from birth to birth.

x x x

87. There is a definite technique by which that immortal spark can be discovered. Though it may appear difficult, each step forward makes the next one easier and a mind made ready by discipline is able to discover the Divine basis of man and of Creation in a flash. There is no short cut to this consummation. One has to give up all the impediments which one has accumulated so far and become light for the journey. Lust, greed, anger, malice, conceit, envy, hate—all these pet tendencies have to be shed. It is not enough if you hear the discourses of Sai Baba and count the number that you have listened to. Thousands are here before Me now; but that figure has no significance. Only those who practise at least one of the things I emphasise, count.

x x x

88. Analyse your words, deeds, and thoughts and get rid of the evil ones that harm you and others: then, cultivate instead *sahana* (fortitude) *shanthi* (firm peace) *sathya* (speaking only the truth), etc. Now, the mind flutters about and squats on all and sundry, all objects in the Universe. It refuses to stay only on one idea, God. Like the fly that sits on fair and foul, but denies itself the pleasure of sitting on a hot cinder, the mind too flees from all thoughts of God. The fly will be destroyed if it sits on fire. The mind too is destroyed, when it dwells on God, for, the mind is but a pattern of desire woven with the warp and woof of the same material. When Rama enters the mind, Kama has no place therein. Desire ceases, when God seizes the mind. In fact, since desire is the very stuff of which the mind is made, it becomes non-existent and you are free. This stage is called, *Mano nigraha Mano laya* or *Mano-nasana*, the death of the mind, the merging of the mind, the killing of the mind, etc.

89. Man has to become Divine, the Divine from which he has come. So, he has to lessen his attachment to the world, not by cutting himself off, but by being in it as an instrument in His hands; by subduing all tendencies towards egoism that raise their heads in him; by single-minded attention to the dictates of

God called *Dharma.* Edison the scientist was so concentrated in the solution of the problems that worried him that he left untouched for days together the food and drink that was pushed in through the doors of his laboratory. You must have the same concentration and *sraddha* while engaged in Sadhana.

x x x

90. The Vedas and the *Sastras* provide illumination to guide the steps of man; but to the blind, it is always dark, however bright the illumination; for those who have lost faith, faltering along, stumbling and falling is the only course. The *Sastras* and the Vedas point out the means of securing the secret of lasting joy; but man is attempting to earn shadow joys, fleeting pleasures, pleasures fraught with evil and harm. He is trying to draw water with a pot full of holes. The senses leak out the joy he draws. They are wild, untutored servants who dictate to their master, the mind. The mind has to be brought under your grip, then the servants will fall at your feet. The mind is the monarch, the senses or *indriyas* are the soldiers. The soldiers are now ruling the king, because he lends his ears to them and not to *Buddhi,* Intelligence, who is the Prime Minister. Let *Buddhi* take charge, in a moment, the senses will be forced back into

camp and the mind can save itself. The Atma is the Sun in the firmament of the Heart. Now, the light of the Sun is obstructed by the thick clouds of *Vishaya-Vasana* (desire of sense objects and objective pleasure); let the strong wind of *Paschaththapa* (repentance and resolution) scatter the clouds, so that the Atma may shine forth brilliantly.

x x x

91. The sound of *manthras* has the power of transforming the impulses and tendencies. The word *manthras* means that which saves, when turned over in the mind. Revolve the *manthras* ever in the mind; that will keep off wild talk, purposeless conversation, aimless gossip and scandal. Talk only when the talk is most essential and talk only as little as necessary. Talk sweetly, and without any reservations or circumvention.

x x x

92. *Vairagya* does not mean that you have to renounce hearth and home and flee to the forest. There is no guarantee that the hearth and home will not follow you into the silence and solitude of the forest; for, if your mind clings to worldly desires, you cannot escape them, by simply putting some distance between you and them. You may be in the jungle, but

your mind may wander in the market place. Similarly, you may be in the market place, but by Sadhana, you can still secure a path of peace in the heart in the midst of the busiest thoroughfare. The mind can build a silent refuge or tie you up into complex knots. It binds, it loosens bonds. You can sail safe on the sea of *samsara,* if you have no leaks in the boat; but, through the leaks of *kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada* or *matsarya,* the waters of *Samsara* will enter the boat and it will sink, drowning you beyond redemption. Do not allow the water into the boat, stop all the leaks. Then, you need have no fear; in, *Samsara* you can benefit by all the chances it gives for training the senses, widening the affections, deepening the experiences, and strengthening detachment.

x x x

93. In *Sathya*, there is no *Mithya;* but, in the *Mithya Jagath,* you have to search for *Sathya* and experience it. You can do it, if you rid your mind of all modifications and modulations. Let it be transformed from its present complex confusion into something like the sky, which does not bear any mark though millions of birds fly through it, and thousands of planes move across it. Be unaffected, untouched,

unattached. That is the Sadhana which will reveal the Reality.

x x x

94. Attachment, affection, interest—these will create prejudice, partiality, illusion. They hide the Truth. They dull the intelligence. *Raga* is *roga;* attachment is a disease, so far as the enquirer is concerned. It does not become the *Yogi* to have *raga* (affection); he must be free from favourites, fancies and fondness. Once you attach yourself to some person or habit or mannerism, it will be difficult for you to shake them off. Like the poor villager who jumped into the flood to salvage a bundle of rugs (really speaking, it was a bear being carried along by the raging waters), but found that the bundle caught hold of him so tight that he could not escape from it—man too jumps in, to retrieve what he considers a treasure, grips but, is himself caught and bound. That is why saints of this land have been teaching the people that they are children of immortality, repositories of peace and joy, of truth and justice, and masters of their senses and therefore, of the external world which cannot entice them into mirages. Of course, man can have some desires, some eagerness to achieve comfort, some attempt to earn content—but it must be like the diseased man

craving for medicine. Hunger is the disease for which food is the medicine. Thirst is the illness for which drink is the medicine. Food and drink, housing and clothing must be subsidiary to the needs of the spirit, the education of the emotions and passions and impulses. They must take the place that salt and pepper take on the dining table today! *Uppu* must be subsidiary to *papu*; i.e. salt must be little and dal must be more; you cannot have more salt than the quantity of dal, nor even as much; so too, efforts to achieve health, comfort, etc. must be just enough for the purpose of sustaining the Sadhana, not more, not less.

x x x

95. It is a sign of foolishness to brood over mishaps and mistakes once committed and punish oneself for them by refusing to take food. It is a very childish way of correction. What is the good of ill-treating the body for the sake of correcting the mind?

x x x

96. Take the world as it is, never expect it to conform to your needs or standards. *Maya* envelops the good with the blemish of the bad; it makes the evil glitter with the shine of the good. Discriminate to the best of your capacity, and develop the capacity to discriminate. Struggle to win, that is the best that you

can do; few can say, "I have won." Your conscience knows the real source of joy; it will prod you towards the right path; your business is to take it as "guide" and not disobey it every time it contradicts your fancy.

x x x

97. Be careful, that the success you have won in the promotion of virtue, in the conquest of baneful habits and in the assumption of the regular disciplines, are not frittered away by the trite company, loose talk, cynical criticism or lackadaisical effort.

x x x

98. Man always seeks happiness by trying to satisfy his desires and if a desire is fulfilled, he feels joy and when it is not, he feels grief. But the trouble is, desire is a bonfire that burns with greater fury, asking for more fuel. One desire leads to ten, and man exhausts himself in trying to exhaust the demands of desire. He has to be turned back from this path of never ending desire to the path of inner content and joy.

x x x

99. Drop the delusion that you have become old or diseased, or that you have become weak and debilitated. Some people begin to count the years and grieve over advancing age and shiver like cowards afraid of Death. But remember, elation is

Heaven, despondency is hell. Have always some work to do and do it so well that you get joy. *Vyamoham* is the dust that settles upon the glass of the chimney of the lantern and dims the light. The attachment to sensual objects and to the pleasure they give is the soot that sticks to the inside of the chimney, that too dims the light. Clean the chimney by *Namasmarana* every day and the lamp will shine for you and others. Also, have good activities and good companionship. That will help very much in spiritual *Sadhaka,* proper atmosphere is very essential for the aspirant. That is why the *Sadhaka* used to go and dwell in the *ashrams* maintained by sages in the past. There they had the unique chance of being immersed in good thoughts, good activities and good company.

x x x

100. When the foot slips, the wound can be healed; but when the tongue slips, the wound it causes in the heart of another will fester for life. The tongue is liable to four big errors: uttering falsehood, scandalising, finding fault with others and excessive talk. All these have to be avoided if there has to be *Shanthi* for the individual as well as for society. The bond of brotherhood will be tightened if people speak less and speak sweet. That is why *Mounam*

"silence" was prescribed as a vow for *Sadhakas* by the *Sastras.* You are all *Sadhakas* at various stages of the road and so this discipline is valuable for you also.

x x x

101. I always say *vaak suddhi* leads to *mano suddhi.* That is why I insist on quiet talk, sweet talk and little talk: the *sathwic* talk—no anger, no heat, no hate. Such talk will cause no quarrel, no blood-pressure and no factions. It will promote mutual respect and love. Then again, do not cynically laugh at the good that others do or at the Sadhana of others. Inquire, but do not insult. Respect the sincerity of the other man, respect also elders and men with more experience than you. In company, behave in a well-mannered way, showering brotherhood and joy on all around you.

x x x

102. There is no need to retire into a forest or cave to know your inner Truth and to conquer your lower nature. As a matter of fact, you have no chance to exhibit your anger there and so victory achieved there may not be lasting or genuine. Win the battle of life, being in the world but yet, away from its

tentacles. That is the victory for which you deserve congratulations.

x x x

103. It is foolish and even harmful deceit to imagine that "keeping awake" is the essential thing in its observance of *Shivarathri.* People try to escape sleep on *Shivarathri* night by playing cards, attending non-stop cinema shows or dramas. That is not the Sadhana which should be intensified on *Shivarathri.* That is a travesty of the vow of "sleeplessness." It vulgarises you and encourages evil and sloth, wickedness and hypocrisy.

x x x

104. Never brood over the past. When grief overpowers you, do not recollect similar incidents in your past experience and add to the sum of your grief. Recollect, rather, incidents when grief did not knock at your door, but you were happy instead. Draw consolation and strength from such memories and raise yourself above the surging waters of sorrow.

Women are called "weak" because they yield to anger and sorrow much more easily then men. So I would ask them to take extra pains to overcome these two. *Namasmarana* is the best antidote for this.

x x x

105. There is no dearth of books telling you how to be free from grief. The *Gita* is available in all languages and at a very low cost, say, four annas a copy. The *Bhagavatha* and the *Ramayana* and all other books are sold at the rate of thousands of copies per day, but there is nothing to indicate that they have been read and assimilated. The breath of the mouth must give an inkling of the food partaken, is it not? But the habits, the conduct, the character of the readers of these books have not undergone any change for the better. Egoism and greed are still rampant, hatred has not abated and envy eats into the vitals of man.

x x x

106. The cow eats grass and drinks gruel, but out of these it creates sweet sustaining milk; so too, let the experiences which are gathered by your senses help in the production of the sweetness of kindness, the purity of devotion and the sustenance of *shanthi.*

x x x

107. Some advanced persons adopt *Mounam,* the Vow of Silence. Of what use is it? What exactly is *Mounam?*

The illumination of the soul is *Mounam!* How can there be *Mounam* without the Atma being illuminated? Without that, merely keeping the mouth shut is not Silence. Some adopt the Vow of Silence, but communicate by writing on paper or slate, or they

point successively to the letters of the alphabet on a chart! All this is pseudo *mounam!* It is only another way of talking without interruption! There is no need to attain Silence. Silence is ever with you. What you have to do is only to remove all things that disturb it.

It is not correct to say that many persons who do not open their mouth to speak, do a useless Sadhana.

If you do not use the tongue, if you are silent in order to keep out the external obstacles to Sadhana, you certainly can develop your thoughts, you can desist from disturbing others, you can escape criticism and worry from others, you will get concentration, your brain will be saved from unnecessary burdens and it can improve much. With such a brain, you can carry on *Smarana* of the Lord's name better. All these advantages you will realise when you do Sadhana.

x x x

108. When you get violent and angry with anyone, quietly go and drink a glass of cold water or repeat the name of the Lord to overcome it, or spread your bed and lie down until the fit of fury passes. While angry, you abuse another and he does the same; and tempers rise, heat is generated and lasting injury is done. Five

minutes of anger damages the relationship for five generations, remember. Let the tongue, accustomed to the bitterness of the margosa fruit of worldly triumphs and disasters, taste the sweet sugar of *Namasmarana.* Experiment with this for a time and you will be surprised at the result. You can feel the vast improvement in peace and stability, in you and around you. Learn this easy lesson, get immersed in joy and let others also share that joy with you.

x x x

109. The night is dominated by the Moon. The Moon has 16 kalas or fractions. Each day when it wanes, a fraction is reduced, until it is annihilated on New Moon Night. After that, each day a fraction is added, until it completes itself on Full Moon Night. The Moon is the presiding deity of the Mind, *Chandramaa manaso jathah.* Out of the *Manas* of the *Purusha,* the Moon was born. There is a close affinity between the *manas* and the Moon, both are subject to decline and progress. The waning of the Moon is the symbol for the waning of the mind which has to be controlled, reduced and finally destroyed. All Sadhana is directed towards this end; *Mano-hara*, the mind has to be killed, so that *Maya* may be rent asunder and the Divinity revealed. Every day during the dark half of the month the Moon, and symbolically its counterpart in man, the *manas,*

wane, and a fraction is diminished; its power declines....and finally, on the fourteenth night, the *Chathurdasi*, there is just a wee bit left, that is all. If a little extra effort is made that day by the *Sadhaka*, even that bit can be wiped off and *Manonigraha* completed. The *Chathurdasi* of the dark half is therefore called *Shivarathri,* for that night should be spent in the *japa* and *dhyana* of Shiva, without any other thought, either of food or sleep. Then success is assured. And, once a year, on *Mahashivarathri* Night, a special spurt of spiritual activity is recommended, so that what is *Savam* can become *Shivam* by the removal of this dross called *Manas.*

x x x

110. Death stalks your footsteps like a tiger in the bush. So without further waste of time, endeavour to give up sloth and anger. Be tranquil amidst the storms. Mix in tranquil company. Let the fragrant smoke of divine thoughts, full of love to all, rise around you.

x x x

111. Make your heart soft; then, success is quick in Sadhana. Talk soft, talk only of God—that is the process of softening the subsoil. Develop compassion, sympathy, engage in service, understand the agony of poverty, disease, distress and despair,

share both tears and cheers with others. That is the way to soften the heart, and help Sadhana to succeed.

There is iron; there is also, a magnet. The magnet will draw the iron to itself, that is the destiny of both. But, if the iron is covered with rust, the grace of the magnet may not operate strong enough to draw the iron near. Greed for sensual pleasure will certainly act as rust. It acts as dust which induces rust! The rust will ultimately burst the iron itself and change its innate nature.

*Thapas, Santhosha, Aasthikyabuddhi, Dana, Iswarapuja, Vedanthavakyasravana, Lajja, Mathi, Japam, Vratham*—these ten form *Niyama.* These are the very foundations of the Mansion of *Moksha.* All Yogis must be well established in these, in *Yama* as well as *Niyama.*

x x x

112. *Yama* and *Niyama* auxiliaries, *Angas* or characteristics which mark them out:

Each of them has ten such. It is only when you are well- established in all these that you are liberated.

Those included under *Yama* are: *Ahimsa, Sathya, Astheya, Brahmacharya, Daya, Arjavam, Kshama, Dhrthi, Mithaahaaram, Soucham.*

x x x

113. There are four stage in Sadhana: the first takes you to *Salokya.* You are in the kingdom of God. You have to obey the King's commands, be loyal to him, respect his slightest wish and serve him sincerely, surrendering without any reservation. The next stage: is *Sameepya:* It is the stage when you are in the Palace as one of the courtiers or chamberlains or servants. You are nearer to Him, and develop Divine qualities. The next stage: *Saroopya:* The *Sadhaka* imbibes the Form of the Divine, that is to say, he is like the brother or near kinsman of the King, entitled to wear royal robes and paraphernalia. And lastly, we have the *Sayujya,* when as the Crown Prince, he succeeds to the Throne and becomes Monarch himself. The subject is as the limb, the King is as the Heart, the mind that does not know the One is a dry leaf, rising with every gust of wind, and falling when it subsides.

x x x

114. Some weak-minded people desire to sacrifice the body in their devotion. This is a poor sacrifice and this cannot lead them towards the goal. Your attempt should be to remain unaffected by the surroundings. On the other hand, if you sacrifice your body, you may again be reborn for doing the same karma.

x x x

115. It is like heat and cold. When it is the cold season, you crave for warmth and in the hot season you crave for coolness. The sense-object contact is exactly like this. So long as the world is there, objective contact cannot be avoided; so long as burden of previous births is there, the joy-grief complex cannot be avoided. Still one can master the art, the discipline, the secret, of avoiding them or bearing them without bother.

x x x

116. You have to consider well and try to know what you have heard and how much of it you are going to put into practice. By merely hearing, your heart cannot attain a state of sanctity. You must think and contemplate over it. This is called *"Manana"* and after *Manana* comes *"Nididhyasa."* Only after *Nididhyasa* is completed, will you be able to have the fruit and benefit of *Sravana* or listening. Today 99 per cent of the people think that they have done their business by hearing, and they do not try to do *Manana* and *Nididhyasa. Sravana,* or listening, can be compared with the cooking that is done in a kitchen. If we bring what is cooked to the dining room and eat it, that can be compared to *manana* or contemplation. After eating, if we try to digest what we have eaten, that can be compared to *Nididhyasa*. Only when all these three actions are done, will that give strength and nourishment to our body.

117. The mind of the Yoga adept should be like the steady upright unshaken flame of the lamp, kept in a windless window sill. Whenever the slightest sign of unsteadiness occurs, you should endeavour to curb the mind and not allow it to wander. Develop the consciousness, that you are in all and the feeling of oneness, that all is in you. Then, you can take up and succeed in all the Yogas. Then you are free from all distinctions like "I" and "others" or as "Atma and Paramatma." The joy and grief of others will then become equally yours.

x x x

118. If you have no patience, your anger is fruitless. Such anger is even harmful to you. Your anger, which arises from a lack of patience, helps your unhappiness to grow. The ability to control this kind of anger will come only when you can develop equanimity of your mind.

x x x

119. This string of your mind should be pulled quite strong and should not be left loose. It is in this context, that we are told that the right path to reach Madhava is to control our mind. By attaching much importance to our mind and body, a mind which is like a water bubble, our entire life is rendered fruitless.

120. Vedantha teaches us that once we recognise the essential basis of all that we see, there is no need for any more Sadhana. If you have a pot with a hole in it, you can never fill it with water. In the same manner, if the pot of our mind has got many holes, in the form of sensory desires, then all the work that we do will not fill our mind with sacred thoughts. Only when there are no holes, can your attempts become fruitful and take you to the divine.

x x x

121. Anger, pride and other passions reduce man to the level of a lunatic and sometimes degrade him to the level of an animal. Therefore it is very necessary that we should recognise *vignana*, *prajnana* and *sujnana*, which are latent in man, and direct them along the proper channel and thus achieve the highest state of supreme bliss. The cause for all the troubles, confusion and turmoil, is the fact that we have lost mastery over our senses. We let them go in a wild fashion. By leaving the sense unfettered and unregulated, we will not be able to discriminate properly, think coolly, calmly, and rationally. Thus many times we are misled into wrong actions. Anger is like an intoxicant. Internally it induces us to do wrong things. This is the source of all the sins. It is a great demon. Anger leads us to commit all other sins. In the case of Viswamithra, we know that all the

good he acquired by *thapas* was nullified by this one evil, anger. The merit be had accumulated through *thapas* undertaken for thousands of years was all lost in a moment of anger.

x x x

122. So long as the *sankalpas* or desires are in man, it is not possible for him to escape being born. 0n the day when he becomes completely free from his *sankalpa* or desires, that day will he be free from rebirth. In order that he may take this sacred path, free from desires, he has to surrender himself. There are certain obstacles for one to be able to surrender. Everyone understands that in this world, it is not possible to enter the house of an affluent person or the house of a person who is in a position of importance with ease and without being questioned. At the entrance to the house, you will find a watchman who will ask what business you have with the owner. If in the case of a person, who has limited power and a worldly position, there are such restrictions regulating your entry into the house, what is the wonder that in the case of God, who has unlimited powers, there are regulations restricting your entry into his mansion. If you want to enter the palace of *moksha* or liberation, you will find that at the main entrance, there are two guards. This entrance is the place where you offer yourself and

it may be called the gate of surrender. The two guards who are there are *Sama* and *Dama.* The meaning of this is that you must make an effort and you must have patience. These are the two guards at the door. However much you offer yourself in surrender, it is not possible for you to enter God's abode without *sama* (effort) and *dama* (patience).

x x x

123. Ordinary folk do not get the mind fixed on Madhava easily at the point of death. It presupposes long training, previous achievement of certain accomplishments, what is called *Purva Samskara.* The mind should have gone through a certain course of discipline; it has to be *Yogayuktha,* possessed of Yoga. Even that is not enough. The mind must discard all other thoughts as low and inferior, even as defiling. The disgust towards all other objects should grow in strength. When these two are present, the thought of Madhava will certainly emerge and be steady during the last moments.

So your mind is the important thing. When the mind rots, all else rots. Man moves as fast as his mind, in the direction that the mind takes. To tame and train the mind, good habits and disciplines have to be sought.

# 7. Role Of Guru In Sadhana

1. Guru Pournima is a sacred day. It is when we honour Vyasa, who gave mankind the precious gem of *Saguna* worship and the hope and assurance that *Manava* can become Madhava, *Nara* can become *Narayana,* that *Jiva* can become *Brahman* or, rather that *Jiva* is *Brahman.* The *Bhagavatha* and the *Brahmasuthra* are the great texts which hold forth these valuable doctrines.

   Man is a mixture of two strands of the same substance, *Maya* and *Madhava, Moha* and *Rama,* and *Dehi Jada* and *Chith, Sariram* and *Sariri, Jiva* and *Brahman.* Like the two circular stones of the grinding mill, the *Brahman* one is stable, the *Jiva* one is revolving. The stable is the base, the revolving is the "dependent." The *Guru* is the Teacher who removes the fundamental ignorance, which hides the knowledge of this truth from us. The *Pournami* Day or the Full Moon Day has been fixed for revering him, for, the effect of the knowledge is to put an end to scorching agony and to shed cool comfort

instead, on the mind of man. Vyasa is revered as Narayana Himself, for who but God can inspire such illumination.

If your loyalty is to the family, you are a servant of the family; if it is to God, you are a servant of God. But, do not pay heed to the wages He gives. Do not argue and bargain for wages or reward. Only hired labourers clamour for wages and declare they are poor. Be a kinsman, a member of the family, a scion, of God; then it behoves Him to maintain you in comfort. Try to be near God, as near as His own kin; do not calculate the number of hours you have spent in serving Him, and pine that He has not compensated you. Be ever in His service, that is to say, in doing good and being good.

x x x

2. The Guru is the person who discovers that you have fallen into a wrong road that leads into further and further darkness. For, he knows the right road and he is full of love for all who strive to escape the travails of the night, without lamps to light their steps. Guru Pournima is a day when the First of Gurus is remembered with gratitude. He is called Narayana, because Narayana is the reality and if you do not get a Guru from outside yourself, if you pray, the Narayana inside you, will Himself reveal

the road and lead you on. It is always preferable to be prompted by that inner Guru because most of those who claim to that status are themselves rolling in objective pleasure or are bound by greed, envy or malice. Guru also means "heavy"; many have only the qualification of physical weight, not of spiritual height!

x x x

3. The aim of all human effort is to achieve the One *Ekam* that lies behind all this plurality. Without achieving it, man can have no peace, within or without; no amount of repetition of the *shanthi manthra* is capable of granting him that. The Guru reveals to the disciple the invisible current that activates the many seemingly distinct instruments, like the bulb, the mike, the fan, the refrigerator, the tape-recorder, the stove, etc. He deserves your gratitude. He is like the stranger who entered the cottage of a poor man and announced that underneath the floor of that hovel, there lies hidden a precious treasure which he can take and own, by a few minutes of digging! The sage, Viswamitra devised the *Gayatri manthra* as a fine drug for the spiritual aspirant; he is also to be revered, for the drug awakens your *buddhi* and confers upon you *Viveka, Vichakshan*, and *Vairagyam*—the three

distinguishing marks of humans, elevating them far above other animals.

x x x

4. The Guru will give you the Name and the Form suited to your temperament and *samskaras.* If the Guru commands you under a threat and orders you to adopt a line of Sadhana declaring, "This is my *Aajna,*" then you can tell him that the main thing is your satisfaction, not his. You have to do the Sadhana in an atmosphere of joy and contentment.

x x x

5. Some great men declare that the Guru is both father and mother; that he is Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara, all in one.

   Based on the Form of the Atma, that is correct. But now, such Gurus are rare. You can speak of him as father. mother, God, etc., on account of love and regard, that is all. How can he be so in fact? As loving as the mother, as protective as the father, you can say. But then what do you say of those who gave you this body and brought you up, even before you got the Guru? First and most important, be grateful to the mother and the father; serve them; make them happy; respect them. Respect the Guru as the person who shows you the Path, who looks

after your progress and is interested in your welfare. Thirdly, worship the Lord as the witness of everything everywhere, as the master of Creation, Preservation and Dissolution, and as the All-Powerful One. Besides, you can consider only the Lord as the Universal Form and as the Universal Friend and Protector. All else have to be treated for just their individual status: the mother as mother, the father as father, the Guru as Guru; in truth all these cannot be one. Ponder over this well. If you seek *Atmasakshatkara,* you have to install in your *Dhyanam* the Form of the Lord which you like most, and not the picture of your Guru. It is not proper. The Lord is of a status higher than the Guru, is it not? Of course have his words as the foundation: and try to attain the Origin of all things; that will give the fruition of all efforts.

You are asked to treat the pebble as a gem. Of course, through compulsion and bound by order, people may obey and accept but can that feeling be genuine? It is no sign of *dhyanam* to have one idea outside and another inside. Unless this conflict is resolved and there is the same idea outside as well as inside, there will not be any stability in *dhyanam* nor will there be any success.

x x x

6. One who lights up the *Atmajyothi* in you by teaching you what is right and what is good, helping you to practise the sacre, can be regarded as the proper Guru. The word "*gu*" means darkness or ignorance and "*ru*" stands for the removal thereof. This means that the darkness of ignorance can be dispelled by the light of wisdom. Such is the function of a Guru. "*Gu*" also stands for one who is beyond all, one who is beyond all attributes and "*ru*" is *roopa varjita* or one who has no form. One who has neither attributes nor a form is only God.

x x x

7. There is the story of a king, the minister and the servant going in a boat over a stormy lake. The servant was thrown into panic at the sight of water all round. There was danger of his upsetting the boat itself. So the minister caught hold of the fellow, pushed him into the water, dipped him a number of times in spite of his shrieks and then when he cried, "The boat, the boat," he was hoisted back. Once in the boat he knew he was safe from the waters of which he was afraid. So too, we are in God, but yet afraid of the waters of Samsara. It is when we suffer the ordeals of *Samsara* that the security and safety of faith in God can be realised.

The eye which is an inch long can see the stars, millions of miles away; but is it the eye that sees? Can the eye see itself? No. You must learn how to know others and more than that, how to know yourselves. You are most curious about others. Even casual acquaintances you meet in railway compartments, you ask about their family affairs, their property and lineage. But, you do not know your own lineage and property, your heritage and status. You are *Manuja,* born of Manu, the person who laid down the moral code which is your property. You have the Lord installed in your heart and so, you are essentially Divine. All this wealth you deny and you go about poor and weak. To see your own eyes, you need a mirror; to see yourself in your native grandeur, you need a Guru.

x x x

8. Man is endowed with memory, as well as the faculty to forget. Both these are useful skills. Perhaps, the power to forget is even more important, for otherwise, man will have to lament over the loss of millions of parents and kinsmen he had in millions of previous births; man will remember and resent the many insults and injuries he has suffered in this birth. Luckily, he forgets all that. He remembers only those things that have impressed him as significant or

crucial, namely, the date of his marriage, the names of those who have to pay him money, etc. The tragedy is, he has forgotten the most significant and crucial thing about his earthly career, the key to happiness and liberation, His real Name and identity!

Man cannot afford to forget who he is and for what purpose he has come. He must know the answer to the question, "*Kasthwam, koham, kutha aayaathah,*" as Sankara said. "Who are you, who am I, where am I going, where did I come from, what is the nature and purpose of all this movement and change, is there any stable base, any goal or aim, direction or director?"—these questions cannot be brushed aside from the mind of man. They come to him and harass him, when he is alone with something grand and awe-inspiring in Nature or with some incident, terrible and shocking, in his own experience. It is not wise to forego these precious moments and turn once again to the humdrum of life, without pursuing the inquiry to which one is prompted.

But, man forgets; he ignores. He mistakes the unreal to be real. He is deceived by appearance, he does not peer behind the veil. He misleads himself and others. He takes *sunna* as *venna*, that is, slaked lime as butter, since both are white; but what a difference in quality and effect? The baby sucks its thumb and

derives immense satisfaction and joy therefrom; we know that it has no taste, no sweetness. But, the baby weeps when the thumb is pulled out. The sweetness in the thumb was imposed on it, by the baby itself. So too, the happiness that one derives from the world is not the nature of the world; it is subjective; it is only the projection upon the world, of the happiness the Atma is capable of deriving, of which it is the source and goal. The baby imagines the thumb to be an external object which is providing it with pleasure, but it is only itself.

The Guru warns and wakens. He reveals the truth and encourages you to progress towards it. Unless you have the yearning, the questioning heart, the seeking intelligence, you cannot do much. The hungry can be fed. He who has no hunger will discard food as an infliction. The Guru is a gardener, who will tend the plant; but the sapling must have sprouted before he can take charge. He does not add anything new to the plant. He only helps it to grow according to its own destiny, quicker perhaps, more full perhaps, but not against its inner nature. He removes poverty by pointing to the treasure that lies buried in the very habitation of man. He advises the method of recovering it, the vigilance needed to use it to the best advantage, etc.

x x x

9. *Karma* and *upasana* depend upon the *Dharma* of the particular stage of your life, as well as the *guna* that rules you. Even *Amritha* will be harmful to life, if it is drunk through the nose. There is a way of life, a method of uplift, a path for progress, distinct for every seeker, different from those of others. The true Guru knows which suits you best. It does not mean that the Guru is partial or prejudiced; it only means that he is kind and considerate, for, he does not insist on all men wearing the same strait jacket.

x x x

10. Surrender the ego, dedicate every moment and every movement, to Him. He has assured mankind that He will ensure liberation from pain and evil. When asked where God is, people point towards the sky or some far distant region; that is why He is not manifesting Himself. Realise that He is in you, with you, behind you, before you and all around you; and He is all mercy, eager and anxious to fulfil your prayers if they arise from a pure heart.

    He who tells you of this all-pervasive God is the real Guru, not he who promises you salvation if you place a purse at his feet. Do not be misled by such worldly men full of greed and egoism. Pray to God to illumine your mind, awaken your intelligence, and

be your Guru. He will surely guide you aright, from the alter of your own heart. For many a Guru today, the fence is more essential than the crop; so he emphasises the restrictions and rules, to the detriment of the Sadhana which they were designed to protect. So they insist fanatically on the observance of outdated regulations and checks, while the very purpose of the regulations is allowed to decay. They magnify the role of Fate, and of the consequence of Karma without at the same time, consoling man by describing the overpowering might of God's grace.

x x x

11. Give up all talk of people who have lost their way. Speak of reaching the path. Give up all contact with such persons and cultivate contacts with places where there is neither lust nor greed nor any other desire. Seek for the Guru who looks on all with equal *Prema.*

x x x

12. There are three entities in the Universe, with which man has to deal; they are: *Paramatma, Prakruthi* and *Jivatma,* God, Nature and Man. Of these, God has to be worshipped by man, to be realised by man through Nature or *Prakruthi.* Nature is the name for all the various items that impress upon man the glory and the splendour of God. It is called *Maya* too.

*Maya* is the vesture of God, which hides as well as reveals His Beauty and Majesty. Man must learn to use Nature not for his comfort or entanglement to the utter forgetfulness of the God behind the joy he derives, but, for the better understanding of the intelligence that guides the Universe. How does a tree grow or a flower bloom, how does man learn about the stars and space, except by the inspiration of the Joy and the Intelligence which He who resides within endows? Approach Nature in a humble, prayerful mood; then your future will be safe. Ravana coveted Sita, who represents *Prakruthi,* Nature, and stealthily brought her over; but, that selfishness and greed led him into the deepest fall. If only he had coveted the God behind Nature, Rama, he could have earned eternal Joy.

All the sufferings of man today can be traced to this false sense of values. First things must come first. First, self; then, help. Now people start helping others on the spiritual path without traversing that path themselves. So both the guide and the led fall into the pit. Serve yourself first, that is to say, understand who you are, whither you are going, whence you came, why you journey and whither. After having discovered the answers to these questions from the scriptures, the sages and one's own undisputed experiences, man can dare lead others on. People also are not trained to recognise

the true from the false, the temporary from the eternal, the right from the wrong, the socially beneficial from the socially harmful. They dismiss all old customs and manners, old texts and rites as useless simply because they are old; they adopt new customs and fashions simply because they are new. Time is a good tester; things that have stood the criticisms of centuries, the blows of many alien cultures, the attractions of strange fancies—these must have been the essential core of truth and validity.

x x x

13. We require spiritual guides who are free from conceit and pride, hate and greed; guides who have travelled the whole length of the journey.

x x x

14. *Gita* does not refer to any problem of family or social life. It teaches the spiritual aspirant the Path that leads to perfect communion with the Divinity, inherent in himself. The reason why it is extolled that this human life is superior to the life not only of beasts but even to the life of the Gods, is that man alone can strive to squeeze from his experience of the objective world, answers to questions on his own origin, significance and goal. *Sastras* indicate the measures for clearing the mind of enmeshing

obstacles so that the answers might be reflected therein. It is clear from the *Sastra* that the world has *Santham*, *Anandam*, and *Jnanam* as its fundamental base, real Reality. What is needed is to remove the shade that is hiding the effulgence, the screen that covers the truth from view.

x x x

15. Like the silkworm that spins from out of itself the cocoon that proves to be its tomb, man spins from out of his own mind the cage in which he gets trapped. But there is a way of escape, which the Guru can teach you or which the God in you will reveal to you. Take to the Sadhana which will bring a relief. Away with the roles of clown and clout, which you have acted all these ages. Take on the role of the hero, not that of a zero! Forget the past, do not worry about possible errors or disappointments. Decide and do.

There are some gurus who advise you to keep a daily diary, where you note down every item of evil that you did; they ask you to read it as a spiritual exercise and resolve to correct yourself. Well, reading it and writing it only tends to impress it more effectively in the mind. It is better to substitute good thoughts for the bad and cleanse the mind of all evil by dwelling on righteous deeds and holy thoughts. Forget the

things that you do not want to remember. Bring to memory only those things that are worth remembering. That is the sane way to achieve spiritual progress.

x x x

16. Sadhana has to be taken up under the direction of an expert, who knows your health and temperament well. Over enthusiasm and irregularity are both to be avoided. If *Viveka* plays false, Sadhana is a snare; a little forgetfulness of the limits of heating may spoil a kiln of bricks; a few extra handfuls of washing soda will ruin a bundle of clothes in the wash; a few extra words regardless of time with the neighbour, and a whole potful of rice is overboiled and wasted. Vigilance, care, circumspection—these are very important for the *Sadhaka.* Yoga is often turned into *Roga,* for lack of continuous self-examination.

x x x

17. The Guru gives you a *manthra,* which you repeat; though you may not know its meaning, it will act as the purifier of your mind. When a ryot has to get something done for him by the collector, he goes to a lawyer, who knows how it has to be asked for; he writes it out in English, and gives it to him as a typed sheet which the ryot presents to the collector. He

does not know what is written or its meaning but it has come from the brain and the experience of a man who is his Guru, for the purpose.

x x x

18. God is in you, but, like the woman who fears that her necklace has been stolen or lost recognises that she has it round her neck when she passes a mirror, man too will recognise that God is in him, when some Guru reminds him of it.

x x x

# 8. Diet Discipline

1. You must see Nature as filled with God, shaped by God, as God, in those shapes and smells and sounds. We see the image in the mirror, because the light rays are reflected back from the surface of the mirror. You are the reflection of the rays of God from the mirror that is Nature. If that mirror were not there, the *Jivi* does not exist as a separate entity. Remove the mirror, then, "you" merges in "He"; and there remains "We." It is *Prakruthi* that induces the belief that you are the body, the *Deha.* You feel, you too are Name, Form like *Prakruthi.* This identification has led to an inordinate degree of attention to the body and consequently, worry and misery. The principle that food is only a drug to cure hunger is ignored and man is enslaved to the tongue. All the twenty-four hours are spent in attending to the care of the body, the prevention of disease, the promotion of health, the development of muscle, etc.—no care is spent on the *Dehi,* the God resident in this physical tabernacle, who has to be recognised and

revered. The weighing machine on which you stand and read your weight with pride laughs at you, for the silly exaltation. It sneers at your conceit over physical victories; it warns you against too much concern over paltry gains. It knows that death is lying in wait to snatch you away, however heavy you may grow. Develop *drishti* (vision), not *deha* (body). Concentrate on the Maker, not the "made."

x x x

2. Indian culture as contained in the Vedas advises us that control of our sensory organs and living on *Sathwic* and good food are the paths for realisation of the self and liberation thereof. This is the reason why from time immemorial, in our Indian traditions, the *Rishis* ate *Sathwic* food and drank clear flowing water, They kept their minds perfectly clean and this is how they were able to understand the Divine spirit.

x x x

3. Moderation in food, moderation in talk, and in desires and pursuits, contentment with what little can be got by honest labour, eagerness to serve others and to impart joy to all—these are the most powerful of all the tonics and health preservers known to the science of health, the *Sanathana Ayur Veda.*

x x x

4. You must care not to eat too much and spoil health. When the body is ill, the mind too becomes weak, and the brain cannot work properly.

x x x

5. *Sathwic* diet does not mean simply the food we take through our mouth but also means the pure air we breathe through our nose, the pure vision we see through our eyes, the pure sounds we listen to through our ears and the pure objects we touch through our feet. All that we take in through the doors of the five sense organs may be described as the *Sathwic* diet. Listening to bad sounds, looking at bad sights, touching bad things do not constitute *Sathwic* diet.

x x x

6. The intake must always be pure and blameless, *Sathwic*. The sound, the sights, the impressions, the ideas, the lessons, the contacts, the impacts—all must promote reverence, humility, balance, equanimity and simplicity.

x x x

7. The mind is the key to health and happiness and so, food must be so chosen that it does not affect the mind adversely; along with *Sathwic* food, the mind

must also be given special diet like *dhyana, japa, Namasmarana*, etc., to keep it sound and steady.

x x x

8. By moderating and modulating habits of eating and drinking, one can lay the foundation for spiritual life. One must prefer *Sathwic* to *Rajasic* foods. By drinking intoxicating stuff one loses control over the emotions and passions, the impulses and instincts, the speech and movements, and one even descends to the level of beasts. By eating flesh one develops violent tendencies and animal diseases. The mind becomes more intractable when one indulges in *Rajasic* food; it can never be remoulded if *Thamasic* food is consumed with relish. To dwell in *Ramathathwa* constantly, one has to be vigilant about food and drink, consumed by both body and mind.

x x x

9. You must be careful about the food you take, for, the *jihva* and the *guhya* are the two great foes of man; the cravings of hunger and sex drag you into perdition. Desist from catering to the tongue and its greed; do not be a victim of lust or taste. Have *Sathwic* food and eat it in *Sathwic* company. Be moderate in food and keep the senses strictly under control.

10. The food that one eats has to be pure, free from the subtle evils radiated by the persons who collect the materials, who cook the dishes and who serve them. Yes; all these have to be carefully watched by the *sadhaka.* The place where one spends his life has also subtle influence on character and ideals. Ramakrishna Paramahamsa used to speak of the peace that one could get in Mathura, Banaras and other holy places. Though the Ganga is a river that is holy every yard of its long journey to the sea, some spots on the banks, like Rishikesh, Haridwar, Kasi, Prayag, etc., are specially surcharged with spiritual vibrations that help the *sadhaka* to cleanse his consciousness, in all its levels.

x x x

11. Dedication is to be carried out in various ways. Take the food that we consume. Offer it to God before you partake of it. Then it is rendered pure and potent. Any act done for the glorification of God is thereby rendered pure and potent.

x x x

12. There are three "purities" to be observed: purity of the provisions, purity of the vessels in which food is prepared and purity of the persons who serve the prepared food.

    It is not enough if the provisions are pure and of good quality. They should have been procured by

fair means; no unfair, unjust, untrue earnings should be used for one's maintenance. These are fouled at the very source. The source as well as the course and the goal must all be equally pure. The vessel must be clean, free from tarnish. The person who serves must not only be clean in dress, but clean in habits, character and conduct. He should be free from hate, anger, worry and indifference while serving the dishes; he should be cheerful and fresh. And he must be humble and full of love. While attending on those who are dining, he should not allow his mind to dwell on wicked or vicious ideas. Mere physical cleanliness or charm is no compensation for evil thoughts and habits. The *Sadhaka* who has to secure concentration has to be careful about these restrictions. Otherwise, during *dhyanam,* the subtle influences of the wicked thoughts of the cook and the servers will haunt the *sadhaka.* Care should be taken to have only virtuous individuals around. Outer charm, professional excellence, reduced wages—these should not be allowed to prejudice you in favour of dangerous cooks and attendants. Examine carefully their habits and the character. The food you eat is such an important constituent of the physical and mental stuff with which you have to struggle in the spiritual field. The purity of the mind can be and has to be

supplemented by the purity of the body as well as purity in its important function, speech. That is the real thapas: physical, mental and vocal.

x x x

13. The body and life in it, are based on food and are sustained by food, *anna.* So food decides the level of attainment, high or low. Nowadays, emphasis is being laid on discipline and regulated behaviour *(Nishta),* without reference to the *Naashta* (food). However great and learned a person may be, however much he pays attention to the teachings of the *Vedantha* and takes care to spread them, if he neglects the strict code laid down for the food that is the very basis of the body and its functions, he cannot succeed, The purity of the provisions, of the cook, and of those who serve what has been prepared, these are not attended to. They feel content when their stomachs are filled, when hunger is appeased. The first temple they visit when dawn breaks is the restaurant, where *"idli"* and *"sambar"* are offered to the *Atmarama!* How can such gourmands get concentration? Purity in cooking, purity of provisions, and purity of service how can these be guaranteed in restaurants? Who pays attention to these? Without doing this, people complain aloud that they do not get success in

concentration, and suffer greater confusion! The effect will be secured only when the proper causes function well. When bitter things are cooked how can the final dish be sweet?

*Aahaara* and *Vihaara* (food and recreation) are both very carefully regulated in the *Gita*, but little heed is paid to its teaching. Nor is it considered so essential. There are people everywhere who swear by the *Gita,* who expound it for hours together and who preach about it. But very few put its teachings into practice. The verses fill their heads but they are powerless to meet the reverses, with philosophical cheer. *Ananda* and *shanthi* can be secured only when food and recreation are cleansed and purified.

x x x

14. Food to be *Sathwic* should be capable of strengthening the mind as well as the body. It should not be too salty, too hot, too bitter, too sweet or too sour. It should not be taken while steaming hot. Food which fans the flames of thirst should be avoided. The general principle is that there should be a limit, a restraint. Food cooked in water should not be used the next day; it becomes harmful. Even fried articles should be consumed before they develop unpleasant odours.

x x x

15. *Rajasic* food is the opposite of the *Sathwic*. it is too salty, too sweet, too hot, too sour, too odorous. Such food excites and intoxicates.

    Regulate your food habits; restrain the greed of the tongue. Eat only *Sathwic* food (conducive to equanimity). Engage yourselves in *Sathwic* recreations. Then you can be free from physical and mental ill-health. Bear calumny, loss, disappointment, defeat, boldly and with equanimity; then no mental depression can overwhelm you. I must tell you that I am happy when someone among you is subjected to suffering, for that is a chance given to you to demonstrate your intelligence and sense of values. Harishchandra (an emperor who stuck to truth in spite of agonising travail, which be could have avoided by the utterance of a single lie), had a series of terrible disasters—poverty, exile, persecution by his creditor, the sale into slavery of his queen, his son, and his own self and the demeaning job that was allotted to him by his master in charge of the cremation ghat in Banaras—the toll collector. He never bent or broke but stuck to his determination not to yield to the call of unrighteousness.

16. Inner cleanliness should be your first aim. Which do you cleanse more in a drinking vessel, the interior or the exterior? You may have fine vegetables, excellent

tamarind juice, chillies, salt, dal; the cook may be a master of the art; the oven may be the perfect type; but if the copper vessel is not tinned, the *"sambar"* will be turned into dangerous stuff that cannot be eaten. It will act as poison to those who eat it. *Sathkarma* (virtuous deeds) *sadachara* (beneficial habits) these act to protect the *sambar* from contact with copper. For you the *Gayatri* and the *Sandhya* rites three times a day will act as the "tin," for the *Hridayapatra,* the heart-vessel, where emotions, impulses and instincts are cooking. The discipline of *sandhya* will tame all instincts even as the mahout's goad subdue the might of the elephant and trains it to perform tricks in the circus ring. Do not fail to make the best of this chance.

For attaining the Four Aims of Human Life, *Dharma* (Righteousness), *Artha* (Prosperity), *Kama* (Fulfilment of Desires), and *Moksha* (Liberation from bondage), the basic requirement is Health of Body and Mind. Disease means, feeling uneasy, disturbed on account of the upsetting of one's temper or balance or equilibrium which affects the physical as well as mental conditions. This happens for two reasons; faulty food and faulty activities (faulty *Aahaara* or faulty *Vikaara*).

It is wiser to prevent disease than run after remedies after it has happened or grown beyond control.

Yogi is the contented God-centred man. *Bhogi* is the man revelling in sensual pleasure. *Rogi* is the man ridden by illness.

People can live longer and more healthy, if only they eat the minimum. Regular prayers twice a day will give strength and courage, which can withstand illness. When someone offers you a glass of water, you say immediately "Thank you." How much more gratitude should you evince to God who watches you and wards of all the harm threatening to overwhelm you. Activity must be dedicated to God, the Highest God. Then, it will provide health of body and mind.

Even material machinery is given rest; they cannot run forever continuously. What then shall we say of the delicately organised human body! Fast one day in the week. This is good for the body as well as for country. Take only water, so that all dirt is washed away. Through dieting alone birds and beasts set their health all right! Only the healthy person can afford to forget the body and dedicate his thoughts to God, and derive *Ananda* therefrom. Illness is the inevitable result of idleness and pandering; health is the inevitable consequence of a tough hard life. Carry on all personal services yourselves, the health situation will definitely improve. Contentment is the best tonic. Use the body as a boat to cross the ocean

of life, with devotion and detachment as the two oars.

No one will be anxious to have the same dress on for years and years. Death is but the casting off of old clothes. When even Avathars leave the body after the Task is fulfilled, how can man be saved from inevitable dissolution?

Drink milk or yoghurt, eat fruits and nuts. They generate constructive, virtuous, spiritual thoughts.

The mind is the puppet of the food that is consumed by man. The quality of the food determines the direction of the desire that diverts the mental flow. That is why in the *Gita* as well as in all spiritual text, *Sathwic* food is recommended for the upward seeking individual. Mind means desire, *Sankalpa,* something sought for. When the Formless desired Form, the Universe arose; so mind is the Creative Principle, the *Maya,* that desired the very first desire "to be many." When it is now fed on *Rajas* or passion and emotion, activity and adventure, it gallops into the world with the plunge of desire. It brings man deeper into the morass. When it is fed on *Thamasic* food, which dulls, inebriates, blunts reason, and induces sloth, the mind is callous, inert and useless for uplifting man.

The quality of the food is determined by the vibrations that it is charged with through the thought processes of the persons who handle it, prepare it and serve it. The company in which food is consumed, the place, the vessels in which it is cooked, the emotions that agitate the mind of the person who cooks it and serves it—all these have subtle influences on the nature and emotions of the person who takes the final production. It is because the sages of India realised this, that they laid down many dos and don'ts for the process of eating, as for the different stages of spiritual progress.

Allergy is produced by unpleasant smells, or when something intrinsically unwelcome is contacted or tasted. A sound mind ensures a sound body and vice-versa. The two are interdependent. Health is essential for happiness. *Rajasic* food enrages the emotions, *Thamasic* food induces sloth and sleep. *Sathwic* food satisfies.

Man does not realise that there is a vast unknown beyond the purview of the five faulty instruments of perception that he has. For example, from every being and thing, constantly without intermission, millions of minute particles and millions of vibrations are issuing forth. Certain substances like camphor emanate so much of these that a lump disappears in

a few days. The bodies of others affect us by these emanations and we too affect them in the same way. Naturally, the growth of the body is affected, as well as the health and strength, by the contact or company we develop. The emanations are intensified when dirt accumulates or sewage collects or drains are choked. Sanitation rules are framed to reduce the possibility of disease spreading from such areas.

Five types of bath are prescribed in the Hindu scriptures in order to maintain physical immunity from the emanation of others, the mud-bath, the sun-bath, bath in water, the air bath and ash-bath where the body is given a coating of fine ash or Vibhuthi, revered as the Mark of Shiva. The ash guards the body from evil contacts and the deleterious effects of the vibrations proceeding from others; it also sanctifies and purifies the vibrations of the individual wearing the ash, for it reminds him always of the inevitable end of all that one feels as one's own, except the Lord who is the very person himself. Untouchability as a social practice must have had its origin in the realisation of this truth.

The gross part of food is discarded as faeces, the subtle part is transformed into muscle, blood, etc. and the more subtle of the subtlest aspect are transmuted into the mind and its activities. That is

why the sages have prescribed certain limits and levels of food, in order to promote the spiritual urges and prevent contrary tendencies. The mouth is the gateway of the physical mansion; if the gateway is foul, what can we say of the residence and the inmates! Cleanliness is next to Godliness. Of course, many sages and saints paid little attention to personal cleanliness, since they were always on the higher plane of nearness to Reality. The body has to be carefully and tenderly fostered; it is a precious gift, a very complicated but well co-ordinated machine, given for achieving a laudable task. its exterior too must be clean and full of the charm of goodness.

The *Puja* in the domestic shrine, the recitation of hymns, the *bhajan* that you do, all send forth vibrations that purify and cleanse the atmosphere, and so disinfect the foods that you consume.

So too the sight of temples, and houses surcharged with Divinity, of idols and sculptures depicting the mystery and majesty of God in His various Forms, of scenes that instil in your mind that littleness of man before the vastness of God's handiwork— these have a salutary effect on the formation of character, and the direction of habits and attitudes.

Kurukshetra is the Field of Food, for Kuru means Food. Food indicates all that is taken in, through

the gullet or the senses. This *Ahara* or *Anna* is what determines the nature of the impulses, emotions and passions. These have to be directed along proper channels and sublimated to serve the goal of liberation from fear and grief. The *Kshetra* or Field or Body must thus be transmuted into the *Dharma Kshetra,* the purified area of virtue, and *vairagya.* Then, the Charioteer will take charge, and man gets liberated, the body becomes *Brahma Kshetra.* That is the life-story of a self-realised person. The self-realised is merged in Atmic Bliss; he is not bothered by external happenings; he has the world of inner peace all to himself.

Limiting birth by artificial means is an absurdly wrong step. This is like chopping off the head, since the door is too low and you do not want to enter with a stoop. What you have to do is to discover means of growing more food, by (to give one example) utilising the vast resources of underground waters. Artificial means of preventing conception will promote licentiousness and bring down on the country bestial promiscuity. Those who encourage these dangerous tactics must rather encourage sense control and self-restraint through Yoga and *seva,* methods advocated in the scriptures by sages who knew the calamities that were the consequences of irresponsible fatherhood or frustrated motherhood. The innocent,

ignorant victims can well be educated to master their lower urges and sublimate them into more beneficial channels. Without mental preparation and determination these artificial methods may cause insanity and other complexes, ill-health and maniacs.

Through the media of films, books, music and the behaviour of elders, young minds are excited and aroused into indulgences. Through the campaign for Family Planning, they are persuaded to adopt means by which they have no responsibility for the consequences of that indulgence. This is indeed, burning the future strength and progress of the nation at both ends. The best method of family planning is the ancient one; making men realise through Sadhana his innate divinity.

x x x

# 9. The Three Gunas

1. This Nilayam has three gates, the outermost one, representing *Thamas* (through which people enter with waywardness, doubt, despondency, etc.); the second one, representing *Rajas* (crossing this, men are attracted by *Drsyananda*, *Nethrananda* and *Mano-ananda*, the sights that please the eye and the mind); and the third one, leading to the Prayer Hall where people develop the rarer, purer qualities called *Sathwic*. This circle summarises the progress of the *Sadhaka* towards realisation, from the dreary sands of desire, through the wild bushy patches of anger and hate, on to the green lawn of *Prema* (love) and gaining the broad region of *Ananda,* he sits in Yogic contemplation, and the *Kundalini Shakthi* is awakened, until the lotus of the Heart blooms and the Supreme Flame is kindled scattering the darkness of *ajnana.* Like the pictures in children's books this circle, with the concrete representation of the symbol on the flag, will serve to remind you and teach you the lesson I am emphasising.

x x x

2. *Sathwic* listening is listening to the stories, experiences and messages of sages and saints who aspired after God and realised Him. *Sathwic* seeing is seeing the worshippers of the Lord, seeing the portraits of saints and sages, attending festivals in temples, etc. *Rajasic* seeing is seeing scenes of luxury, pictures of sensuous joy, of pompous pageantry, of the exhibition of power and status and display of egoistic authority. Taking delight in the description of sensuous scenes and incidents, in the demonstration of power and authority, in the assertion of might and prowess—these are to be classified as *Rajasic* listening. Others take delight in listening to gruesome adventures, stories of wicked ogres and vicious deeds. Such are *Thamasic* individuals. They admire cruelty and terrifying tactics and they take pleasure in keeping such pictures before them. They worship demonic blood-thirsty Gods and they revel in the lore of ghost and eerie forces.

x x x

3. To seek *Brahman* without first ensuring a moral and virtuous life is like desiring a flame without lamp or wick or oil. Acquire all these three, then you light it and get light. So it is with the light of *Brahmajnana,* or Realisation of *Brahman.*

There is one point here which *Sadhakas* have to note carefully. The lamp, the wick and the oil must be proportionate. If the wick is too big for the lamp or too small, if the oil is too much or too little for the wick, if the lamp is too small or too huge for the oil or the wick, the flame will not burn brilliantly and give light. Clear steady light can be secured only when all three are in proper proportion. The three *Gunas* too must be in equilibrium to yield maximum result, the result of liberation. The three *Gunas* are bonds; man is bound by them, like a cow whose forelegs are tied together, whose hind legs too are bound and whose neck and horns are bound by a third bond. The threefold *Gunas* are such threefold bonds. How can the poor beast move freely when it is bound so? The *Sathwa Guna* is a golden rope, the *Rajo Guna* is a copper rope and the *Thamo Guna,* an iron rope; all three bind effectively in spite of the difference in the cost of material. As bonds, all three are obstacles to freedom of movement.

x x x

4. On *Shivarathri,* the mind must become *laya*, reduced into nothing. *Lingam* means that in which this *Jagath* attains *laya, leeyathe*; that into which this *Jagath* goes, *gamyathe*. Examine the *Linga;* the three *Gunas* are represented by the three-tiered

*Peetha*; the *Lingam* above symbolises the goal of life. *Lingam* means "a symbol," the symbol of creation, the result of the activity of the three *Gunas* and of the *Brahman* which permeates it and gives it meaning and value. When you worship the *Lingam,* you should do so with faith in this symbolic significance.

x x x

5. Spiritual health is preserved and promoted by attention to three *Gunas*: *Sathwa*, *Rajas* and *Thamas.* Health is preserved and promoted by attention to the three humours: *Vatha* (wind), *Pittha* (bile), and *Kapha* (phlegm). *Tri-dosha* has to be avoided, that is to say, the three humours must not get vitiated or unbalanced. A healthy body is the best container for a healthy mind; illness makes the mind agitated and anxious. The material and the spiritual are the two pans in the balance, they have to be attended to, in equal measure, at least until a certain stage of progress is attained in spiritual development.

x x x

6. Man suffers from two types of ills, physical and mental; the one caused by the disequilibrium of the three tempers of *Vatha, Pitha* and *Sleshma* and the other caused by the disequilibrium of the three

*Gunas: Sathwa, Rajas,* and *Thamas.* One peculiar fact about these two types of illnesses is that the cultivation of virtue cures both. Physical health is a prerequisite for mental health and mental health ensures physical health. An attitude of generosity, of fortitude in the presence of sorrow and loss, a spirit of enthusiasm to do good, to be of service to the best of one's capacity; these build up the mind as well as the body. The very joy derived from service reacts on the body and makes you free from disease. The body and the mind are so closely interrelated.

7. Hold your right palm, spread it vertically before you! You find that the thumb points towards you and is keeping apart from the other fingers. That represents the *Paramatma* which is aloof and unaffected. The forefinger is the *Jivi,* attached to the three *Gunas,* the three-stranded complex of the objective world. It seeks to mix with this, that and the other, to show this and mark out that; it is very busy identifying objects and so it gets the company of only the three *Gunas.* But, once let it turn, turn towards the Paramatma—let it achieve *Samipya* with it! Then it will lose contact with *Gunas;* it and the thumb will form the *Chin-mudra,* the sign of the *Purna,* the Completed Consciousness.

x x x

8. *Kaivalyam* is the state in which the Divine is experienced as all comprehensive, as Will, as Activity, as *Ananda,* as Intelligence, as Existence. You must suppress your dullness *(Thamas),* sublimate your passions *(Rajas)* and cultivate purity *(Sathwa)* in order to be established in *Kaivalyam.* You have come through *Thamas* and *Rajas* and you are now in the region of *Sathwa* as symbolised by the two gates through which you have come. Now, you must take the lesson of the symbol of the flag of *Prasanthi* to heart. It instructs you to travel beyond the realms of lust, anger and hate, reach the broad green region of love. Be seated there, in concentrated, meditative prayer and open the petals of your heart through Yoga, so that the supreme illumination may be gained.

x x x

9. It is not merely Sadhana like *japam, dhyanam, Namasmarana*, etc., which is necessary. That will have to be done, but in order to supplement the effect of these, you have to lead a regulated life, a life conducive to good thoughts, with *Sathwic* food and *Sathwic* pursuits. Until you try out my prescription fully and sincerely, it is best you keep quiet. You do not know even a pebble; how can you evaluate a peak?

x x x

10. The desire for the result of your action is a sign of *Rajoguna;* the giving up of action since you cannot benefit by the fruit is a sign of *Thamoguna.* To engage oneself in *Karma,* to know that the result will follow; and yet not be attached to it or getting concerned with it that is the sign of *Sathwaguna.*

x x x

11. The clothes one wears and the language one has on the tongue do not decide who is a *Sadhu* and who is not; it is the *Guna* that settles it. All animals have the potentiality to be good; so fostering goodness in all is the best means of ensuring the welfare of the world.

x x x

12. The senses have to be trained to be free from *Thamas* and *Rajas;* they must be neither dull nor dragging, neither dormant nor dangerously diverting. The *Gunas* must be overcome. A student approached a Guru and inquired the road for *Shanthi.* He replied that he must develop *Sahana,* tolerance, towards all men and all things and all events. Nothing should arouse interested reaction, disgust or desire. The Highest alone must be sought. God alone must be desired.

x x x

13. The mind is ever unsteady. It has to be educated. Its quicksilver quality has to be curbed. It is really *Chaithanya Swarupam* and it will become steady only when it is merged in *Chaithanya,* that is, the Divine. There may be ice on a lake. The ice is *jada.* Move it all to one side. Press it aside and the *Sahaja Swarupam* of water, the *Chaithanya* reveals itself. That *Chaithanya* has no joy or sorrow. It is ever in perfect equilibrium. "I am that." I am not affected by either. Mine is *Samadhi* or intelligence which is *sama,* steady, unaffected, unchanging Wisdom.

x x x

14. Remove the cataract and the vision becomes clear. So too, remove the feeling of inferiority that dwarfs you now. Feel that you are *Atmaswarupa, Nithyaswarupa, Anandaswarupa* (full of bliss). Then every act of yours becomes a *Yajna,* a sacrifice, a *puja.* The ear, the eye, the tongue, the feet all become tools for your uplift, not traps for your destruction. Transform *Thamoguna* into *Thapogunam* and save yourself.

x x x

15. By imbibing the teachings of the *Bhagavatha,* your *Thamas* will be aroused into *Rajas* and purified into *Sathwaguna.* It is like the fruit growing by the

combined influence of the earth and sun into full sourness, partial sweetness and finally complete sweetness, in three stages. Man too by the twin forces of the Grace from without and the yearning from within grows into the complete sweetness of *ananda* and *prema.*

x x x

16. You come to Puttaparthi, secure a picture, and taking it home, begin worshipping it every week on Thursday; but all that is simply *sathkarma* (good activity). That won't take you far. You must also develop *Sathwaguna,* virtues, good habits, good attitudes, good characteristics, a good character. Otherwise, your life is a chain of pluses and minuses, one cancelling the other out, totalling up to a mere zero. When you say, *Thath thwam asi,* "Thou art that," you must have the traits of that which you claim to be. You say, "that and this" are the same; then, reviling "that" or revering "that" is the same as reviling "this" or revering "this."

x x x

17. *Thamas* is like the worms that creep and crawl in offal; *rajas* is like the fly that sits on foul things as well as fair; *sathwa* is like the bee that visits only fragrant flowers. But all three are drawn towards

objects, whereas one should be free from all traces of attachment. When hearts are infested with flies and worms, the flit of *Namasmarana* has to be used for disinfecting the place.

x x x

18. We praise our ancient seers but discard their heritage; we revere the texts they collated, but disregard their teachings. We expound their doctrines and discoveries, but decline to practise them! We are beggars living in a house of gold. The fact that it is precious metal that surrounds us is unknown. Discover it and you are saved.

This is called *Praptha-Prapthi*, attaining the already existing. This mike was purchased from a shop. It was not in the possession of the man who wanted it. But peace and joy are not like this mike. They are not available in shops. They are in the possession of the very men who are is need of them. A friend comes into your room when you are desperately in need of money and you ask him for a loan. Just then, quite by accident, he finds inside the pages of a book from your bookshelf that he starts reading, a tenner that you had kept there and forgotten. It is your money, but you had ignored it. It was out of sight. He drew your attention to its existence and saved you from the shame of a loan. That is an example of

*Praptha-Prapthi.* The Guru reveals the treasure within.

x x x

19. More than the Guru, the *guri* (goal) is essential for attaining the Divine. The very pursuit of the goal will evoke the *Sathwaguna* and weakens the hold of the inferior *Rajas* and *Thamas* in your composition. *Danavathvam* or fiendishness is caused by *Thamas* and *Manavathvam* or human nature is stabilised by *Rajas,* but, *Sathwa*, alone can guarantee the elevations into Divinity. *Sathwaguna* fertilises the upward tendencies of man. It cleanses the mind, removing the weeds of evil. *Sathya* is the very basis of *Sathwaguna. Sathya* and *Sathkarma*—Truth in word, deed and thought, as well as acts beneficial to others.

x x x

20. You are now seeing with the eye—a three-lettered physical apparatus, the three letters representing the three *Gunas—Sathwa, Rajas* and *Thamas.* See with the clarified, unprejudiced, unattached "I"; then, you see only One; though you see yourself, you are indeed everything that refers to itself as "I."

x x x

# 10. Steady Faith And Devotion

Of course, you can master disease and death, avoid agitation and anxiety, by taking the prescribed remedies and observing the prescribed regimen. Sing the glory of God when you are afflicted by grief or distress; for it is at such times that you need Him most. It is when fever is on, that the tablets have to be taken at shorter intervals or in larger numbers. The Pandavas knew this secret to success; they called on the Lord, wherever circumstances conspired against them. Ordinary mortals start lamenting, "O, all my *puja* has been is vain; all the worship, I offered so sincerely and with such heartfelt yearning has been a waste." Others too, laugh cynically at the misfortunes of the devotees and draw them away into the dreary desert of unbelief. Do not give ear to these evil men. Be firmly rooted in faith, feed the roots with repentance and prayers. Only those who are engaged in *puja* and worship in order to impress others, will give them up when fortune takes a turn. The rest will accept whatever comes with the supreme

indifference of the saint; fortune, good or bad, is for them only the obverse and reverse of the coins of Divine grace.

The true sign of a Sai *bhaktha* is this steadiness. He cannot be swerved from this chosen path by cynicism or the call of luxurious pomp. He puts spiritual teachings into practice and knows the immeasurable gains it gives.

x x x

2. Having come upon the world stage as "man," one should act the role effectively. The tree is known by the fruit. The human body is the temple of God. He is installed there. Yearn for the realisation of this Truth, seek to discover it and derive bliss therefrom—that is *Bhakthi* (devotion, the path of love of God). Love the highest, love the most loveable; do not love anything lower.

x x x

3. When you live the life of Sadhana, you will meet with opposition from various sources. But do not attach any importance to such. First, your kith and kin will try to divert you into worldly pursuits. Krishna had his own maternal uncle as his inveterate foe! Rama had a step-mother who sought to exile him into the jungle! Do not be cowed down by

cynics or the critics who may abound in the family. Then there is public opinion which might decry the spiritual path and subject you to ridicule or worse. Sisupala, Jarasandha and the brood of traducers tried hard to smother the mission of the Lord, when he was here as Krishna. Another obstacle is from the worshippers of Names and Forms, different from those which you have adopted as most appealing to you. People who are attached to one particular Name and Form, either through hereditary preference or mere fancy, are prone to persecute those who adore other Names and Forms. It is far better to die tracking a tiger than live to boast of shooting a lame jackal!

x x x

4. The Play is His. The role is His Gift. The lines are written by Him. He directs, He decides the dress and decoration, the gesture and the tone, the entrance and the exit. You have to act well the part and receive His approbation when the curtain falls. Earn by your efficiency and enthusiasm the right to play higher and higher roles. That is the meaning and purpose of life.

x x x

5. You get the marks that your answers at the examination deserve, not more, not less. Sometimes,

if you secure only 5 or 6 out of a total of 100, even the 5 or 6 may be cancelled and you will be assigned just a zero. But, if you get a number very near the minimum needed for a pass, the 2 or 3 that you fall short of, will be added on, as grace marks and you are very likely to be promoted. This is true of Sadhana also. Poor progress in it is as bad as failures, whereas good progress will be appreciated and Grace will pull you through.

x x x

6. If you have a silver image of Ganapathi and you desire instead an image of Krishna, it is foolish to cover the image with a piece of cloth and pray that it might get transformed into Krishna! You have to break it into pieces, melt the silver and pour it into a new mould, the mould of Krishna. So too, if you seek to transform yourself into Madhava, you have to pour the mind melted in the fire of *Jnana.* The mind can be melted only after it has been hewn into pieces by means of various acts like *seva*, *sankirtan, japa*, *dhyana,* all sharp with the edge of renunciation.

x x x

7. Let me tell you what the first steps in sadhana are: Practise silence. Then, you can more easily recognise the galloping of the mind after worldly happiness.

Restrain its movements; turn it inside, into the calm lake of bliss that lies deep in the heart! Get over fear, by establishing your mind in the One, for, fear can arise only when there is another.

x x x

8. If the individual does not improve himself but tries to improve the society, it is no use and the attempt will be a failure. We must first try to set right our home. Then we must try to improve the village, afterwards our district; next our province and next the whole country. We must go step by step like this. But without knowing ourselves first, it will be meaningless attempting to improve the society and the whole country. If we want to experience the *Sath-Chith-Ananda*, we will be able to do so only in the society. It is madness to go to the forest and try to experience *Sath-Chith-Ananda* instead of improving our home and the society in which we are living. God is all-pervading. He is found in the hearts of all living beings. How can a heart which cannot love the living fellow-beings love God? People will be, on the one hand, praying to God and on the other, they will be harming other people. This is not proper. We shall be able to love God only when we are able to love the people, our fellow beings. If we are not able to love the people, we will never be successful in this world.

x x x

9. Faith in God being within the heart, faith in His Constant Presence and Constant Guidance— will confer courage, virtue, and illumination. The *Sastras* say, have faith in the doctor, so that you may get cured of illness; have faith in the *manthra* with which the preceptor initiates you, for, then alone can your Sadhana be fruitful; have faith in the sacredness of the temple, for then alone is your pilgrimage profitable; have faith in the astrologer's predictions, for without it, why bother yourselves with him and his abracadabra? Have faith in the Guru, for then alone will your steps be steady and firm, on the path to Self-realisation. Faith in the Guru should bring faith in the Atma, or else, the Guru is a handicap.

x x x

10. Detachment, faith and love—these are the pillars on which *Shanthi* rests. Of these, faith is crucial. For, without it, sadhana is an empty rite. Detachment alone can make sadhana effective, and love leads quickly to God. Faith feeds the agony of separation from God. Love lights the way. God will grant you what you need and deserve; there is no need to ask, no reason to grumble. Be content. Nothing can happen against His Will.

x x x

11. *Japam* and *dhyanam* are means by which you can compel even the concretisation of the Divine Grace, in the Form and with the Name you yearn for. The Lord has to assume the Form you choose, the Name you fancy; in fact, you shape him so. Therefore, do not charge these two, but stick to the ones that please you most, whatever the delay or the difficulty.

x x x

12. You need not rely on another for success in *dhyana* and *japa* and await contact with some sage in order to get from him a *manthra* for recitation. Pray to the God within you and you will receive the needed guidance.

x x x

13. Peace of mind will not descend on you because your room is air conditioned or your sofa, soft-cushioned. It does not depend on your bank balance, or on the diplomas you have collected. It can come only when you deny the *danava* in you; all chances of moving you when you encourage the Divine in you to manifest Himself.

x x x

14. Even those who have these three in ample measure are not free from misery; they are not restored to

*ananda. Ananda* is an inner treasure, won by detachment and discipline. We must have a plan for *ananda,* a plan for *shanthi* and *santhosha.*

x x x

15. The Lord does not test a man just for fun; He does not pile calamity on calamity because He enjoys it. Examinations are held, to measure achievement and award marks and honours. You must ask to be examined, so that your progress may be recorded.

x x x

16. Sow the seeds called Name of God in the well-prepared field of the heart; feed it with the manure of faith; have discipline as the fence to keep out stray cattle. Without a fence guarding the crop, farming will be like shooting without a bullet: all sound and no game!

x x x

17. The correct discipline to acquire the *Nishkama* attitude is dedication; and dedication is possible, only when you have intense faith in God. That faith becomes steady through Sadhana. Now, spiritual Sadhana is like the snacks one eats; the main dishes are all of the world, from the world. The spiritual must be the major portion of the food.

x x x

18. The first sign of spiritual life is detachment. If you have no *vairagyam,* you are illiterate so far as spiritual scholarship is concerned. *Vairagyam* is the ABC of Sadhana. *Vairagyam* must become strong enough to make you discard the bondage of the senses. Just a few minutes of thought will convince anyone of the hollowness of earthly riches or fame or happiness. When you are affluent, everyone praises you; when the tank is full, hundreds of frogs croak all round. When the tank is dry, not a single one is there to address the tank. If the corpse has a few jewels on it, the proverb says, many will claim kinship with the dead person; if it has no valuables on it, not a single person will come forward to weep for it! Consider when you are adding to your bank account further sums of money whether you are not accumulating troubles for yourselves and your children, making it harder for your children to lead clean, comfortable and honourable lives. When you struggle to achieve paltry fame by devious means, remember who among crores of your countrymen are honoured today, and for what? Don't you see that only those who gave up, renounced, sought the more difficult road of God-realisation, instead of the easier path of World-realisation, are honoured everywhere?

Welcome all the blows of fate, all the misfortunes and miseries, as gold welcomes the crucible, the hammer and the anvil in order to get shaped into a jewel; or as the cane welcomes the chopper, the crusher, the boiler, the pan, the sprayer. the dryer, so that its sweetness may be preserved and used as sugar by all. The Pandavas never demurred when disasters fell thick upon them. They were happy that they helped them to remember Krishna and call upon Him, Bhishma was in tears on the arrow bed, when he was about to pass away. Arjuna asked him why and he replied, "I am shedding tears because the miseries undergone by the Pandavas pass through my mind." Then he said, "This is done in order to teach the *Kali Yuga* a lesson: never to seek power, position or pelf, but to submit to the Will of God, in a completely resigned way, so that you may be ever happy and unmoved."

The Lord rushes towards the *Bhaktha* faster than the *Bhaktha* rushes towards Him. He takes a hundred steps towards you! He will be more than a mother or father. He will foster you from within you, as He has saved and fostered so many saints who have placed faith in Him.

x x x

19. Man is ill, but he is resorting to remedies that cannot cure. Diagnose yourself; discover the root cause; apply the proper remedy, that is the way of the wise. Do not run after quacks or pseudo-panaceas. Sow the seeds of *prema,* after preparing the soil of your heart, removing the weeds. Let them grow, watered by faith; and yield the blossoms of *Sahana* (fortitude). Later, you are assured of the fruit; *Shanthi* (peace). This is the task. This has to be the vow.

x x x

20. From the very beginning, take enough precautions to ensure that the seed you sow is good and free from defects. Do not start any work with evil motive of pomp, selfish aggrandisement, competition or challenge. Do not ascribe to God the failures due to your own faults and errors. Pray before, during and after, that the canker of egotism may not spoil the effort. The buffalo has horns, the elephant has tusks. But what a difference. The tusks are much more valuable. The man with faith and the man without it are both human, but what a difference! With faith, he is so much more efficient, courageous and wise.

x x x

21. Nowadays, you can bribe your way to success in every sphere. But God cannot be won by tricks or

through short cuts. He can be won only by the hard way of struggle, detachment and tough discipline. Yearn desperately for Him, fill your mind with His form, His majesty, His glory and His grace. Man is innately Divine; comes automatically into his consciousness. But the curtain of *maya* prevents that thrilling contact, that illumining revelation. This *maya* is also a Divine artifice, it is a vehicle or *upadhi* of the Lord.

x x x

22. Whoever speaks about the Vedas and Vedantha with reverence and sincere yearning, is worth listening to intently. I notice one great defect in you. When I am discoursing, you listen to every word, with marked avidity and enthusiasm. But when pundits and others are speaking to you, on subjects that are valuable to you, out of their own deep study and sadhana, though you sit silently and dutifully, I do not find the same avidity and the enthusiasm. This is wrong. Rain water is rain water whether it falls from a spout, or the eaves, or through a canal or sluice. What they speak is also authentic and beneficial. What you should care for and treasure in your memory is the "curative property of the drugs," not the label on the bottle or the name and status of the manufacturer or dealer.

Benefit from the drug; cure yourself; become illumined; realise your Reality.

x x x

23. On this holy day, resolve to spend each hour in the contemplation of the glory of God; do so, at least as a duty; for the exultation which that contemplation will bring will unconsciously encourage you to continue it with greater zest. The sun is turning Godward, as the mythological story says. He is the postman who will carry your letters, if correctly addressed and stamped (with the stamp of sincerity), to God and bring back His grace. Put your yearning in the envelop of resolution. Hand it over every day to the sun. Do not write asking for a house, or a son, or gold. Ask for bright intelligence, in order to realise the majesty of God. Ask for steadfastness in His service, in His adoration.

x x x

24. You can gain that victory only by rigorous Sadhana. Spiritual Sadhana is more arduous than physical Sadhana; imagine the tremendous amount of effort undergone by the lady who runs along a wire stretched across the ring, underneath the circus tent. After all, the gain is just a few rupees. The same steadfastness and systematic effort aimed at a higher reward can endow you with mental balance and you

can maintain your equilibrium under the most adverse or the most intoxicating circumstances. The *Jnanendriyas* are more important for this type of Sadhana than the *Karmendriyas,* and *Buddhi* more important than all the rest of the inner instruments given to man. Make *Buddhi* the master of your *manas* and you will not fail: you will fail only when the senses establish mastery over the mind.

x x x

25. Move forward towards the light and the shadow falls behind; you move away from it and you have to follow your own shadow. Go every moment one step nearer to the Lord and then, *Maya,* the shadow will fall back and will not delude you at all. Be steady, be resolved. Do not commit a fault or take a false step and then repent! Have the *thapam* (the deliberation, the decision, the discipline) first; that is better than *paschath-thapam*, (regret for the mistake made). Arjuna had *thapam,* he saw the consequences even before the battle began and wanted Krishna to advise him what to do. But, Dharmaraja, the eldest brother had *paschath-thapam,* sorrow after the war was over, repentance after the loss incurred.

x x x

26. *Bhagavathaprema* or steady Love of the Lord is like a mosquito curtain; it will keep out the

disease-carrying *Moha* and *Mada, Kama* and *Krodha, Lobha* and *Matsarya.* Develop faith, so that you may love without doubt. The "illness" that ended on *Guru Pournima* first shook the faith of many, but later, confirmed the shaken faith. That is not as good as keeping it unshaken, whatever may happen. How can the nose that falls down when you merely cough, be firm when you sneeze?

x x x

27. Be steady in Sadhana, and never hesitate once you have decided on it. When the bus is moving on, the dust will be floating behind as a cloud; it is only when it stops with a jerk that the dust will envelop the faces of the passengers. So, keep moving, keep steadily engaged in Sadhana. Then, the cloudy dust of the objective world will not cover your face.

x x x

28. This discipline is essential, when as at present the temptations to deviate are so many. In this iron age, when darkness is enveloping the mind of man, any little lamp that can light the steps is most welcome. That is why I advise you to resort to *Sath-karma, Sad-achara* and *Sath-pravarthana* (good deeds, good conduct and good attitudes and outlooks), so that you may be established in the Constant Presence of the Lord. You must also strive to "hear" *(sravan)*

elevating words, to ruminate on these promptings of the spirit *(manana)* and then, when the validity is recognised, to meditate on it in profound reverence *(nididhyasan).* All other activity is secondary; this alone is edifying, this alone is beneficial.

x x x

29. So, instead of indulging in vain prattle, glorify God and walk in His Path and pray to Him. Spend the allotted span of years in the contemplation and the adoration of the Almighty, not in servile praise of the feeble, the futile and the weak. Life is an opportunity afforded to each, not to eat and drink, but to achieve something nobler and grander, to master oneself and merge in the Reality.

x x x

30. All spiritual endeavour has as its aim the attraction of the Grace of God on ourselves. That is why when you go to a temple and stand before the main shrine, you strike the bell hung there; the sound will draw the attention of the Lord to the supplicant just arrived. The bell must be accompanied by a sincere prayer from the heart.

x x x

31. Faith in God is the best reinforcement for spiritual victory. When you revel in the contemplation of the splendour of the Lord, nothing material can attract you. All else will seem inferior. The company of the godly and the humble alone will be relished.

x x x

32. Do not disturb another's faith. Why argue with another that Sai is supreme, when the fact is, worship of the Lord in any form, in any name, is worship of Sai?

x x x

33. Men are spinning cocoons for themselves, they suffer because they are unable to come out of it into the world of light. They are like the monkeys caught by the wandering beggar, dancing at the end of the rope and begging paisa from those sitting round the ring. Sankara said that he would willingly offer the monkey (mind) to Shiva so that He may teach it tricks which please Him and use it for getting alms for Himself. That is to say, Sankara proposed to fill his mind with thoughts of God, so that the monkey would be tamed and made to serve God's purpose. You too must make the mind the servant of God, not the slave of the senses.

x x x

34. The mind can be mastered, however difficult the task might be. By systematic practice *(abhyasa)* and by relentless inquiry *(vichara)* and detachment *(vairagya)*—the mind can be mastered. There is no task that cannot be accomplished by steady practice. Place faith in the Lord and practise with the certainty that you have the power and the Grace and all tasks become easy.

x x x

# 11. The Significance Of The Hindu Festivals

Festival days are marked out in the calendar in order to waken the mind of man, which is apt to doze off in sloth or complacence after some spurt of Sadhana. They are like alarm bells, which go off at intervals during the year, warning man of the journey ahead and the goal beyond the horizon. *Thasmad jaagratha jaagratha!* say the sages; therefore be warned! Awake, arise, stop not until the goal is attained.

The hour and the moments have to be auspicious, so that auspiciousness may result. Hence, the careful study of the calendar is prescribed. The planets cannot prevail over the Grace of God.

Calendar makers calculated the years and declare that it is 5078 years after the Kali Era began. Ardent seekers have sought the key to all knowledge, the one thing that, if known, all else is known, namely, the Divine, that is latent in every atom of the Universe; they have described it as something that is

beyond words, beyond the ken of human imagination and understanding. The Divine is pictured in the human form, so that man can easily comprehend it and approach it, and derive bliss out of that contemplation.

Sages who have designed the Hindu calendar have arranged the holy festivals for fostering mental stamina and emotional purity. Belief in the Creator, the Designer, the Supporter and the Disintegrator is a necessary equipment for the pilgrim on earth. Fear of sin, love of God—these two endow man with peace and joy, save him from sorrow and grant him *ananda.* During deep-sleep, one is not aware of time, space or causation. Only the "I" persists; the "I" that is *Sath-chith-ananda* (being, awareness, bliss). But, during deep-sleep the "I" is not aware of its *ananda,* not aware of itself. During Dream Stage, the intelligence, the senses, are all dormant. It is the seat of the ego and ego plays all sorts of pranks with the mental stuff during sleep, when the senses and reason are temporarily out of action. The mind is a bundle of resolutions and hesitation, of desires and doubts. When the basis of the ego is removed by spiritual effort heroically directed towards this end, then, all the drama of name and form drifts away into nothingness.

1. GURU POURNIMA: Do not imagine the others to be distinct, they are only you, in so many mirrors. All are sparks from the same flame.

   What the incarnations of God re-established on firm foundations is *sathya* (truth). Truth gets hidden, appears distorted, is declared as falling. So, the *Avathar* asserts its validity and value once again. Be always concerned with *Brahman;* then, you are entitled to be known as a Brahmin.

   The Guru is a sage who is beyond the effects of the three *Gunas* or attributes. One who has not the ecstasy of Divine Experience, is not a Guru who can lead you. No letter will reach the addressee when it lacks the 20 paise stamp! What will take their prayers to the addressee—God, is the 20 paise stamp—dedication or *Bhakthi.*

   One who is aware that He is all names and all forms will adopt a sound which is profoundly significant, which summarises all Names, namely, the *Pranava* sound, the *Akshara* (unchanging, indestructible). Through the changing to the unchanging—that is the journey. From the *Kshara* to the *Akshara.* There are three steps or stages in this journey. "I am yours. You are Mine" and finally, "I am You." Every *Sadhaka* has to walk from one to the other

and reach the journey's end. Move on, don't halt. Reach the point where churches do not matter, where all roads end, from where all roads run. Attaining Self-realisation is not done by a trick, or a ruse, it has no short cut. Prayer must emanate from the heart where God resides and not from the head where doctrines and doubts clash.

*Guru Pournima* is all days when the Mind of Man whose presiding deity is the Moon, is Full *(Poorna),* with cool refreshing rays, which it receives, in the first instance from the sun (intelligence). The Mind must derive illumination from the Intellect the Discriminating Faculty and not from the Senses, which are the deluding forces. When sensual desire tarnishes the Mind, it cannot earn peace and joy.

Do not cultivate too much attachment to things of the world, which appeal to carnal desires and sensual thirsts. A moment comes when you have to depart empty handed, leaving all that you have laboriously collected and proudly called your own.

The 5 points of discipline to be followed are: (1) Silence, (2) Cleanliness, (3) Service, (4) Love, (5) Hatelessness. Each has its allotted role in the drama designed by the Almighty. Do not slight, insult or injure any being; for, He is every being and your slight becomes a sacrilege.

You meet Sanyasis, Yogis, Gurus, Anandas and Babas, people who fly high only to cast their eyes searching for sustenance as vultures do. Many rise only to get a better view of the lowly earth, as vultures do, when they fly high to get a wider view of the spots where carrion lies.

Through *Prema* alone the inherent, the immanent One can be recognised. *Prema* or Love is a much misused word. Any positive response to the attraction is called Love, any feeling of attachment, however, trivial or transitory is characterised as *Prema.* The yearning to reach for the sublimity that lies inherent in Truth—this alone is entitled to be called *Prema.* Only those who are aware of the current within, the Atma, can identify the Source of Power before them, the *Avathar.* The warning signal, the timely advice, is given by the *Jangam* (the spirit of right) in the *Angam* (the physical body). It reminds you of the absurdity and the danger inherent in the identification of the Self with the body, it encourages you to discriminate between right and wrong; it is God, enthroned in every heart as the Highest Wisdom, the *Prajnana,* the Eternal Witness, whom you can contact easily in the depths of *Dhyana.*

The *Sangam* (group) of voices around the *Jangam* play around the Spirit of Right, trying to distract it.

But the principle that guides and guards you along the spiritual path is the *Lingam,* that is in the centre of the *Sangam,* clustering round the *Jangam.* The *Lingam* is the very core of the heart of man, as the sole purveyor of Bliss, Power and illumination.

Cultivate the vision directed inward. The mind will then be illumined with the cool comforting Light of Love—Wisdom. That is why the mind has as its presiding deity the Moon—*Chandrama manaso jatha.* Hence, the celebration of the Day of Thankfulness for all Gurus and the Prime Guru, Vedavyas is done on the Full Moon Day. Scatter the dark clouds of ignorance and egoism that cover the face of the Sun shining in the sky of your heart. God will be ever near, ever dear, ever ready with counsel and courage. Cultivate, not these external ceremonies and festivals, but, the Internal Sadhana, the Inner vision, the spiritual longing. The vision of the *Virat,* the Cosmic Form, is given for those who surrender their ego and take refuge in the Lord (as Arjuna did) and who imbibe with care the *Gita* sung by the Lord in the Silence.

x x x

2. NAVARATHRI: It is the festival to commemorate the Victory of Good over Evil. The Embodiment of

Divine Power (of *Parashakthi*) in its various manifestations, *Sathwic* (as Maha Saraswathi), *Rajasic* (as Maha Lakshmi), *Thamasic* (as Maha Kali) was able to overcome the forces of vice, wickedness and egoism during the Nine Days' struggle and finally, on Vijaya Dasami Day (the Tenth Day commemorating Victory), the Valedictory Worship is done.

The six enemies of man are eating into his vitals, embedded in his own inner consciousness. They are the demons to be killed. They are *Kama* (Lust), *Krodha* (Anger), *Lobha* (Greed), *Moha* (Attachment), *Mada* (Pride) and *Matsarya* (Malice). They reduce man to the level of a demon. They have to be overpowered and transmuted, by the supreme alchemy of the Divine Urge. Then, the nine nights of struggle will become new, devoted to the purification of the mind, and the illumination of the soul. What is attractive to the ordinary man is uninteresting and unknown to the Yogi; what is attractive to the Yogi is uninteresting and unknown to the worldly man. That is the nature of this topsy- turvy world.

Man is proud that he is flying far into the sky and even landing on the moon; but he is incapable of living at peace with himself or his neighbours. His life on earth is full of fear and anxiety, but he proclaims without shame that he is the zenith of creation! He

does not know how to put down the fire that burns within himself, but he is able to destroy entire cities by fire emanating from bombs.

*Swa-raj* means full mastery over your senses, mind and intelligence, through the recognition of the Atma. Just as a thermometer indicates the heat of the body, your talk, conduct and behaviour indicate your mental equipment and attitudes, and show how high is the fever of worldliness that affects, you. These have to be *Sathwic,* untinged by passions of emotions like hate or pride. Talk in peace, promoting peace in others. What is the use of *japa* and *dhyana,* when your talk and conduct are not even human? How can you hope to approach the divine grovelling in the slush of the bestial? Objective possessions and subjective desires both are handicaps in the race for realisation. Let the breeze of holiness blow as it wills through it. Let not the darkness of blind ignorance desecrate it. Life is a bridge, over the sea of change, pass over it, but do not build a house on it. Hoist the *Prasanthi* Flag on the temple, that is your heart. Subdue the six enemies that undermine the natural bliss in man, ascend the Yoga stage when the agitations are stilled and allow the splendour of the Divinity within (the Atma) to shine forth, embracing all for all time.

x x x

3. MAHA SHIVARATHRI: Without the motivator, Nature is helpless. Appearance is but a reflection of Reality; Ishwara is but a reflection of *Brahman,* the intelligence behind the awareness of all. Shivarathri inspires us to learn this basic truth and shape our lives in the light of that illumination.

   The Grace of God cannot be won through the gymnastics of reason, the contortions of Yoga or the denials of asceticism. Love alone can win it, Love that needs no requital, Love that knows no bargaining, Love that is paid gladly, as tribute to the All Loving, Love that is unwavering. Love alone can overcome obstacles, however, many and mighty. There is no strength more effective than Purity, no bliss more satisfying than Love, no joy more restoring than *Bhakthi*, no triumph more praiseworthy than surrender.

   Right living, balanced living, true living is the prescription of Vedantha. The fair face of Vedantha has been disfigured by fanatic and false interpreters. Love should not be rationed on the basis of caste, creed or economic status or intellectual attainment of the recipient.

   Whatever the handicap, however, you are tempted to loosen the grip, hold on to God. There is always

a calm after the storm. Passion, agitation, anxiety these degrade human stature. *Yad Bhavam tad bhavathi*—you become what you yourself feel. Making or marring is the activity of your own mind. Cultivate the attitude of observing everyone as the "I" of which it is but a wave. Then, you can rid your mind of prejudices. God is the Chauffeur, the *Sarathi.* Surrender to Him and be rid of further bother. Travel safe and arrive happy.

Shivarathri is observed every month on the fourteenth night of the dark half, for the Moon which is the presiding deity of the human mind, has only one night more to be a non-entity, with no influence on the agitations of the Mind. In the month of Magha, the Fourteenth Night is named Maha (great) Shivarathri. It is sacred for it is the Day on which Shiva takes the Linga Form for the benefit of Seekers. Shiva is revered as the Form which is to be adored for the acquisition of *Jnana* or Wisdom. *Jnana Maheswaraad Icchad,* as the Vedas advise. Contemplate this day and this night on the Atma Linga, the *Jyothi Linga,* the Symbol of the supreme Light of Wisdom, and be convinced that Shiva is in every one of you. Let that Vision illumine your inner consciousness. Outer ritual is prescribed to make the inner message explicit. But human nature prefers

the easier path of outer formality to the path of inner discipline and direct experiencing. These are not quite relevant to the real purpose of the festival.

Ishwara, a name of Shiva, means that He has all the Glory that is associated with Godhead. *Samkara* means that He causes by his Grace, *Sam-ananda* of supreme level. Shiva is the embodiment of *Ananda;* hence the *Thandava* Dance, which He enjoys so much, with the Cosmos as his stage.

Consider the significance of the Form that Shiva has assumed for human adoration. In his neck, He has the holocaust-producing poison, Halahala, that can destroy all life in a trice. On His head, He has the sacred Ganga River, whose waters can cure all ills, here and hereafter. On His forehead, He has the eye of Fire. On His head, He has the cool comforting Moon. On His wrists, ankles, shoulders and neck He wears deadly cobras which live in life-giving breath of air. Shiva lives in the burial ground and the burning-*ghat,* the *Rudrabhumi,* the land of Shiva or Rudra. The place is no area of dread; it is an auspicious area, for all have to end their lives there, at the close of this life. Shiva is teaching you that death cannot be shunned or frightened away. It has to be gladly and bravely met.

Shiva is said to go about with a begging bowl. He teaches that renunciation, detachment, indifference to good fortune or bad—these are the paths to attain Him. Shiva is known as Mrtyunjaya, He who vanquishes death. He is also Kamari, the Destroyer of Desire. These two names show that he who destroys Desire can conquer Death. For Desire breeds Activity. Activity breeds consequence. Consequence breeds Bondage. Bondage results in Birth and Birth involves Death.

Ishwara is also symbolised in the Linga Form. Linga is derived from the Sanskrit root, *Li,* means *Leeyathe,* (merge); It is the Form in which all forms merge. Shiva is the God who blesses beings with the most desirable gift of mixing in the Universe. That is the end, the death, which one should strive for, the end which Shiva can vouchsafe. Realise the God in you first; then if you involve yourself with the material world, no harm can come to you, for you will recognise the objective world as but the Body of God. Reaching Him is the inescapable task of man.

Shiva means Graciousness, Auspiciousness, *Mangalam.* That is the reason why the epithet, Sri, which indicates these qualities is not added to His names, (as in the case of the Avathars, Sri Rama or Sri Krishna). Shiva is adored as the Teacher of Teachers, Dakshinamurti. The Form of Shiva itself

is a great lesson of Tolerance and Forbearance. The Halahala poison is hidden by Him in His throat, and the beneficent Moon is worn on His head. This is a lesson for man to keep away from others all harmful tendencies and to use for their benefit all useful tendencies that he can command.

Man is inherently Divine; he ought therefore demonstrate in thought, word and deed the Divine attributes of love, tolerance, compassion and humility. God is Truth; man too must live in Love, eschewing anger.

There are many who bargain with God and offer gifts of money or articles if He would confer Grace. God cannot be mollified by the gift of a coconut or a purse of 116 rupees. The *Gita* lays down that God will be pleased by offering leaf, flower or fruit or even a drop of water. The leaf is your body, which like the leaf sprouts, greens, fades and finally falls off from the branch. The flower is the heart freed from the inner pests of lust, etc. The fruit is the mind, the consequence of its yearnings, which have to be dedicated to God. The water is the stream of tears that flow from the eyes when one is in ecstatic bliss at the contemplation of God's Glory. Giving those four is the real act of surrender, *Saranagathi.* Love all beings—that is enough; Love with no

expectation of return. By this means, you will realise Unity and get rid of the ego that harms.

It is said Sankara (God) stays on Himachal. It does not mean he stays on Himalayan mountains. *Hima* means pure, blemishless and cool, *Achala* means without movement. The heart which is pure, blemishless, cool and steady is Himachal. Iswara (God) stays in such hearts only and keeps dancing in such hearts. Sankara is fond of *Damaru;* Brahma is fond of the Veda Song; Saraswati is fond of *Veenagana* and Vishnu is fond of the *Pranava* which emanated at the time creation came into existence. All the sounds are contained in our hearts only.

*Paramatma* (God) is described as *Trayambaka* because God has Power of Volition *(Iccha Shakthi),* Power of Action *(Kriya Shakthi)* and Power of Knowledge or Wisdom *(Jnana Shakthi).* Similarly one who bears Sun, Moon and all Consuming Fire is *Trayambaka.* By propitiating such *Paramatma* one has to reach one's goal through works of propitiation. The goal and destination of all one's work or actions is to progress from Body Consciousness *(Dehatma Bhava)* to Life Consciousness *(Jivatma Bhava)* and from Life Consciousness to Divine Consciousness

*(Paramatma Thathwa).* The symphony of feeling, tuneful melody and marking of time *(Bhava, Raga, Tala)* is Bharatha. That is the joining or gathering together of Power of Volition, Power of Action and Power of Wisdom *(Iccha Shakthi, Kriya Shakthi* and *Jnana Shakthi).* If we are not deriving the benefit and developing ourselves, it is our misfortune.

Iswara is the repository of all the resources essential for prosperity. Iswara confers the *Aiswarya* of *Jnana.* Shiva is inherent in every thought, word and deed, for He is the energy, the power, the intelligence that is behind each of them. God who is manifesting as Time, Space and Causation is in you. *Shivoham, Shivoham* was the exclamation that rose from the souls that knew the truth in a flash of illumination after long years of cleansing the mind through the process of *thapas. Shivoham* means that You are Divine.

The Vibhuthi (Sacred ash) is the most precious object in the fully spiritual sense. Shiva burnt the God of Desire or *Kama,* called Manmatha (for he agitates the mind and confounds the confusion already existing there) into a heap of ashes. Shiva adorned Himself with that ash, and thus He shone in His Glory, as the Conqueror of Desire. When *Kama* was destroyed, *Prema* reigned supreme. When there is no desire to warp the mind, Love could be

free and full. The ash signifies your triumph over tantalising desire. Ash is the ultimate condition of things; it cannot undergo any further change. The Abhisheka with Vibhuthi is meant to inspire you to give up desire and offer Shiva the ash of its destruction. Ash cannot fade, does not dry and disappear, or get soiled and unpotable, will not lose colour, does not rot; and lasts forever and ever. So, burn your viles, your vices, your bad habits, worship Shiva, rendering yourselves pure in thought, word and deed. Since every being is *Shiva Swarupa* (for without Shiva, it is mere *Sava*—corpse), man has to live up to that Divine Status.

Maha Shivarathri is dedicated to the disintegration of the aberrations of the Mind, and so, of the Mind itself by dedicating oneself to Shiva, God. The Moon as well the Mind whose Deity it is, have each 16 phases. On the Shivarathri, Fifteen of these have disappeared; and, there is just a streak of the Moon in the sky. New Moon that follows will have not even that streak visible. The Mind too must be mastered every day until, on the fifteenth day, fifteen phases have disintegrated and only a streak remains to be removed by a final flourish of effort.

The *bilva* leaf (three-leaved) is placed while adoring Shiva, symbolising the three Gunas, the three attributes

which man has to overcome—the *Thamas*, *Rajas* and *Sathwa* and the three prongs of time (past, present, future) held as a spear by Shiva.

The Trisul, the three-pronged spear in the hands of Shiva symbolises the three phases of Time (past, present and future) and the three dimensions of Space—earth, sky and the nether regions. The handle of the Trisul demonstrates the One of which the three are manifestations. The *Sruthis* declare the *Purusha* as Splendour, as *Jyothi.*

The Upanishads declare that God is the ten-inch symbol of *Kala* (Time) *Desa* (Space)—*Dasangula Swarupa.* It is the *Linga,* the Elementary Form which symbolises the First Emergence of the Will of the Divine.

Do not be misled by what you see: what you do not see with your eyes is much more significant. Man has in him all the Bliss, as well as all the equipment needed to unravel it; but he is caught in dire ignorance of his own inner resources. A good deal of "Desire for sense satisfaction" has to be removed before that inner spring of Peace and Joy can be tapped. You do not make any attempt towards this, and so, there is no Peace or Love or Truth in the house, the community, the nation and the world.

Twins take different paths. For, they live in a competitive warring world of passions and emotions. It is only when God is the Goal and Guide, that there can be real Peace, Love and Truth. Constant remembrance of the Name is the sign of surrender. *Smarana* is enough. The uninterrupted awareness of *Soham,* of the Unity of I and He, is called *Akhanda-hamsa-japa,* unbroken *japa* of the *Hamsa manthra* of *Soham.* It will ensure freedom from anxiety, fear and grief. When the mind goes, there is no more *Moha* (deluding Desire and attachment) and the *Kshaya* (Decline) of *Moha* is *Moksha* (Liberation).

x x x

4. VAIKUNTA EKADASI: *Vaikunta* means, without any trace of grief or pain; the place where perfect Peace reigns, and there is no flutter or fear. *Ekadasi* means, the eleventh day of the lunar fortnight. The phases of the moon are numbered, and the day after the tenth, *Dasami,* is referred to as the *Ekadasi.* But the real meaning of *Ekadasi,* the eleventh is this: when the senses—the five senses of action and the five through which knowledge of the objective world is gained—are all co-ordinated and turned in the direction of God, the 11th, then it becomes genuine *Ekadasi.* This is also the meaning of *Namaskar,*

where you fold both palms together and hold them on your chest, near the heart region. The ten, senses surrendered to the person adored, with real sincerity in the heart.

This is a day on which one has to transcend the lower impulses originating from the *Thamasic* and the *Rajasic* natures and help the upsurge of *Sathwic* tendencies.

Man has to pay attention to 26 categories. The 5 senses of action *(Karma Indriyas),* the 5 senses of Knowledge *(Jnana Indriyas, the 5 vital airs (pranas);* the 5 attributes of the elementary principles—smell (of *Prithvi* or earth), taste (of water), light (of fire), touch (of air), sound (of sky); and the remaining 4, mind *(manas),* intellect *(buddhi), chitha* (differentiating consciousness), and *ahamkara* (individualistic consciousness, the ego). The *Jivi* (individual soul), the wave is the 25th, it has the 26th the *Paramatma* on one side and the 24 on the other. It has to illumine all the 24, and draw them all to the Reality, namely, 26th category, the *Paramatma.* When they are illumined, they disappear, for they cannot survive Light, they are but creatures that are the progeny of *Maya* (Ignorance, Darkness).

When the 24 are analysed and known, nothing is gained. For, they belong to the realm of the relatively

real, not the absolutely real. They are *Jagath,* the moving, changing, the transitory, the untrue. Know thyself. You know the world which is but a projection of Thy Mind.

The multifarious efflorescence of *Maya,* the primal Desire which proliferated into the Universe—all that is the permutation and combination of the five elements, to cognise which man has equipped himself with the nose (smell – earth attribute), tongue (taste – water attribute), eye (perceptible form attribute of fire), skin (touch – attribute of air), and ear (sound – attribute of sky). So, the statement; says, I am not "the Body"; that is, it declared that Nature, the Universe, all Created things and beings, are not "I" or Atma, but only appearances of "I."

The realisation of the One cannot be won by means of advice, listening to talks or austerities. Sadhana that turns the physical into the metaphysical is the solar action that confers potability.

Deep-sleep is often compared to *Samadhi,* for the senses, the mind, the reason, are all absent therein, only the ego is immersed in itself. It is in bliss, but it is not aware of that bliss, for waking alone gives that knowledge. So, what can grant realisation is the awareness of the waking stage and the bliss of the

sleeping stage. Concentrate on the point, when one is having these two; that is the moment of victory.

*Samadhi* means balanced, unruffled intellect. When there is One, how can even thought arise. That is the *Sama-dhee* the Being, the Awareness and the Bliss.

x x x

5. MAKARA SANKRANTHI: Every home is swept clean. Women draw auspicious designs in flour. They place in the middle of that design a lump of cow-dung with a big yellow flower. The cow dung symbolises the cow, the *Go* which Gopala feeds and fends. *Go* (cow) also means, beings, souls, individuals. Thus each trivial detail of the festival rites has a meaning.

Again, this day, you are requested to eat sweet rice cooked in milk. That is the food called *Sathwic,* which promotes elevated thoughts, mildness and humility. What you take in through the eye, the ear, the nose, the skin, your thirst for variegated experiences of the objective world all is food. Every particle of it has to be *Sathwic,* so that your progress towards Self-realisation may be quick and fruitful.

The moon represents the mind, and the sun the intellect. Both must be balanced in a disciplined

man; it should not be one or the other, emotion or intelligence, but emotion held back by intelligence. You will accept bravely whatever happens—fame or shame. Welcome every happening with an "yes."

The Sun takes the Northern Path from today; the Higher Path. In the North, the Himalayas welcome you into "Unaffectedness" *(Achala),* Purity *(Hima),* Snow and immaculateness (Pure, white untarnished clarity) and Coolness (Perfect Joy). Whenever the mind yearns for and pursues those four gains, it is on the Northern Path, leading to the Himalayas, the Abode of the Gods; it is following the Sun, the splendour of the intelligence.

People hung mango leaves across their doors today to welcome God into their home. But, your home is your heart. Hang the streamer of green across the door-sill of your heart. Enthrone and adore the Divine there with all sincerity, offering Him your deeds, your words, your thoughts.

You celebrate the Sankranthi with a feast, where you prepare a dish out of green gram, rice and jaggery. The gram is Lord Vishnu, the rice is His Consort (*Sri* or Plenty and Prosperity), and the jaggery is the Principle of Divine Love. So, it is not that dish marks the festival, it is the contemplation of the Divine that has to be established in the wayward mind.

From this day of the Tropics of Capricorn, *Makara Sankramana* as it is called, the Sun appears to move from South to North, and so, this Summer Solstice day is celebrated as an auspicious festival since ages. But, you are concerned more with your own journey which is nearing its end with every sunrise.

You yearn to escape the consequences of birth and the aftermath of death. You desire peace and joy. For this, you have to cleanse the mind so effectively that it is well-nigh eliminated. This is possible, only when you identify yourself with the Atma rather than with the body which is the casket of the Atma, earned as a reward for one's activities of mind and body.

You must have witnessed car festivals. The colossal chariot will be gorgeously decorated with flags and festoons; stalwart band of men will draw them to the music of blowpipe and conches; acrobats, dancing groups, chanting minstrels, all precede it and add to the exhilaration of the occasion. Thousands crowd around the holy car and line the streets. Their attention is necessarily drawn towards the entertainment provided, but they feel happiest when they fold their palms and bow before the idol, installed in the chariot. The rest is all subsidiary, even irrelevant to many. So too, in the process of life, the body is the chariot, the Atma is the idol, installed

therein. Earning and spending, laughing and weeping, hurting and healing, and all the various acrobatics of daily life are but subsidiary to the adoration of God, the attainment of Atma (Divine Soul).

The body is the chariot, intelligence *(buddhi)* is the charioteer. Desires are the roads through which it is drawn by the rope of sensual attachment. Liberation *(moksha)* is the goal. *Moola-virat-swarupa* (the primal all-pervasive Divine) is the Master in the Chariot. The car which you carry has to be treated thus. Instead, men are wildly milling round and round in dreary circles, from birth to death, pulled by wishes or pushed by needs. No milestones on the pilgrim road are crossed; no bridges are negotiated; no progress is registered. The very process of the journey is ignored.

Unless you make some disciplined effort, some Sadhana, Grace cannot descend on you. The yearning, the agony of unfulfilled aim melt the Lord's Heart—that is the anguish *(Aavedana)* that wins Grace, Unless you illumine your heart and make it shine clear and pure, it will be shrouded in darkness, immersed in *Rathri* (night) only.

x x x

6. DIPAVALI: Dipavali is the Festival of Light. Knowledge too is praised as light, but is often a

clouding fog. Love alone gives Light. Expansion is Life. Expansion is the essence of Love. Love is God. Live in Love. You can light a million lamps from one, but yet the first will not suffer a jot. Love too is like this. Dipavali is intended to teach you this lesson of light and love. Without a lit lamp no auspicious ceremony is initiated. When the lamp of love is shining, God manifests. Keep it burning bright and pure.

God first, the world next, myself last. You have to be a *Sadhaka* now or later, so that you can be liberated from the cycle of birth and death! Now, everything is topsy-turvey, and God is lost. You can hold fast to him either through *Jnana, Bhakthi* or *Karma Marga* (path). You may travel first, second or third class in the train, the destination is the same. Activate them in deed, they are but parts of one ray.

Spiritual progress and bliss depend on disciplined effort. It can come only through hard and difficult toil, not through pleasant easy paths. Life becomes worth living, only when one has disciplined habits, concentration of mind, renunciation of sensual pleasures, and faith in the Atma (the Self). No one who is ignorant of the path can reach the goal; no one unaware of the goal can choose the path and tread

it. You must have a proper conception of the path as well as its destination before you decide on the journey.

x x x

7. ONAM: Onam Day is celebrated on the Day when Emperor Bali was both humbled and blessed by God in the form of Vamana. Bali is the grandson of Prahlada. On the Onam Day, you feast on the bananas, when you have first to remove the skin. For Bali to be accepted by God, the bitter cover of egoism and power-mania had to be removed. Cultivate love, and suppress pride and egoism to win the Grace of God.

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